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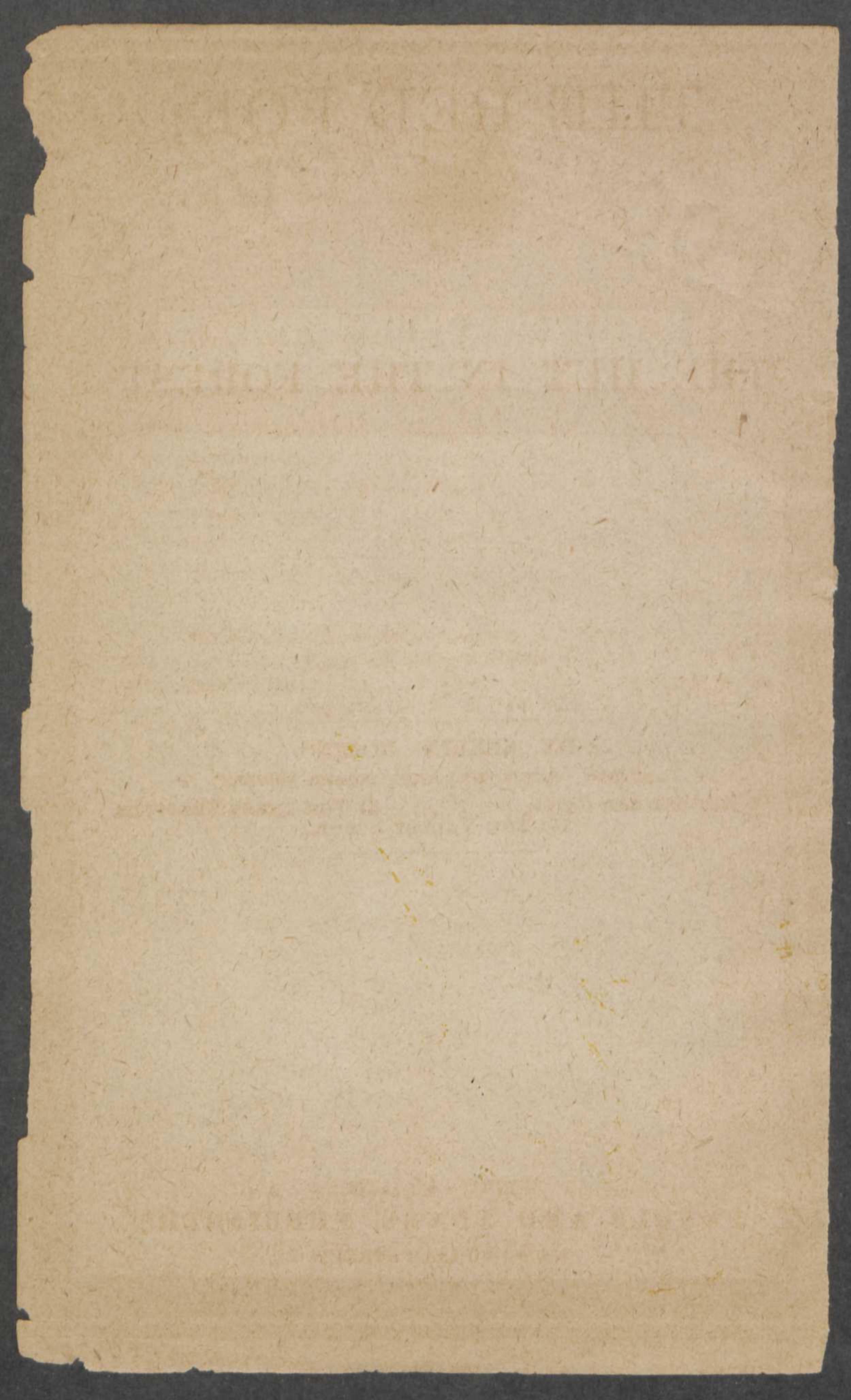
POCKET NOVELS



The Red Foe.

160





THE RED FOE;

OR,

THE HUT IN THE FOREST

BY SEELIN ROBINS,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING POCKET NOVELS:

19 THE SPECTER CHIEF.

84 THE THREE TRAPPERS.

153 THE VALLEY SCOUT.

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THE GREAT EIGHT

10

THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHT IN THE EIGHT

J. REED

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old story with a new twist, notwithstanding which I do not care
to follow it. However, when we get to the hut, you will see
what I mean.

THE HUT IN THE FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

OMENS OF A STORM.

"I do wonder now whether them 'ere Indians intend to come this way or not."

Miss Jellaby removed her spectacles from her thin, peaked nose, after gazing across the clearing in the direction of the woods, and carefully wiping them with her handkerchief, turned round and walked into the house again, with the remark.

"I don't believe nothin' at all about their coming down here, fur all I've heerd tell so much about it."

It was at a close of a warm day in July, 1794, and the venerable maiden lady had been standing in the door of Colonel Heywood's residence,—a house which had been erected a number of years before, when he emigrated from the East, bringing with him, his wife, a meek, quiet woman, her sister, who was just the opposite, and the little daughter Lucy, who had now grown into a beautiful young woman.

The home was established in the wilderness, several miles beyond a considerable settlement, and taking the advice of friends, he build a substantial block house, and he toiled and labored until a goodly portion of land

was brought under cultivation, and in a few years, his possessions became valuable, even in that new country.

Among the visitors who occasionally called at his house was a certain Captain Bobston, a pompous, egotistical man, some thirty odd years of age, who, a few weeks preceding the commencement of our story, had received an appointment in General Wayne's army. He was rather corpulent and much given to boasting of his powers and exploits, and excessively vain of his personal appearance, always feeling satisfied that no living woman could resist his fascinations when he chose to exhibit them.

At the time of his first visit to Colonel Heywood he fell desperately in love with his daughter Lucy, a bright-eyed little brunette, and his visits became quite frequent after this, until the trying scenes of an Indian war kept him at the settlement. Lucy, at the time of her first meeting with the redoubtable captain, knew nothing by experience of the grand passion of her nature, nor did the assiduous attentions she received from him seem likely to afford her any insight into it.

When General Wayne commenced his preparations for his great Indian campaign, Captain Bobston, as we have already said, received an appointment under him. Before leaving to join him, he bade Lucy an affecting farewell, picturing the awful perils which he was about to face for the protection of the thousands of families along the frontier, adding that he only wished if he should fall, she would shed one "crystal tear" over him. Lucy, who was really touched by what he said, promised that she would ever remember him, and with a light heart and bright face he took his departure.

What was her surprise, several weeks later, to see Captain Bobston approaching her home. She discovered him on the very edge of the clearing, at a distance away, and concealing herself from view watched him as he came up. She noticed that he carried some sort of sticks in his hands, but not until he was quite near did she suspect what they were. She then saw him place them under his shoulders, and moderate his gait as though he walked

with extreme pain. Her heart leaped as she reflected that perhaps he had been badly wounded, and she inquired with much concern as to the cause of his using crutches. He knitted his brows, screwed his mouth up and gasped out.

"My infernal horse throwed me. General gave me a furlough till I recover. Too bad—shut out like enough from the great battle."

It was evident from this that he had chosen the residence of Colonel Heywood as the best place for him to regain his health and strength. The quick-witted Lucy more than half suspected he was hardly injured, and that it was only a ruse of his to escape the danger, and to be with her. Of course she could not refuse him the hospitalities of her house, and so he remained, week after week, wondering why his injury was so long in getting well, and lamenting the cruel fate that deprived General Wayne of his counsels and assistance.

The previous summer a dreadful occurrence had taken place upon the estate of Colonel Heywood. He had sickened and died in the spring, and been buried by his almost disconsolate family and negroes in the woods, in accordance with his expressed wishes upon his death-bed.

The block-house, of which we have spoken, was occupied by the servants during the night, one of their number always standing guard. When the danger was threatening, the females also staid there; but during this summer they remained within their own house. The negroes, from long immunity from the Indians, although perhaps it was owing more to the death of their kind but rigorous master, grew lax in their watchfulness, still keeping up, however, the appearance of standing sentinel every night. On one of these occasions, the one performing this duty lit his pipe, and fell asleep. When he awoke, the block-house was in flames, and he himself thrown struggling into the midst of the blazing pile. He, and three of his companions, were burnt to death, two negroes only, Pharaoh and Peter, escaping.

This terrible blow, which placed her family at the mer-

cy of the weakest foe, almost decided Mrs. Heywood to return to her home in the East. In this she was strongly urged by her sister, the querulous Miss Jellaby, who had always been opposed to their emigrating West. This prudent step, however, was deferred month after month, until a year later still found her there still, undetermined whether to go or not. Her two servants managed to keep the ground under cultivation, and everything was progressing prosperously and favorably. The news of the coming campaign of "Mad Anthony" filled her with misgivings and fears, and she gladly welcomed the coming of Capt. Bobston, strong as were her suspicions that he was hardly a suitable protector upon whom they could rely in the hour of adversity and peril.

CHAPTER II.

STARTLING NEWS.

It was about the middle of the warm summer to which we have referred. The sun, shining from an unclouded sky, beat down upon the broad clearing, until the air glowed and quivered, as if heated by a furnace. The broad creek to the east of the Heywood residence flowed lazily by, its surface as clear and unruffled as the face of a mirror. The forest, which bounded the entire horizon, seemed wrapped in an eternal silence, scarce a breath of wind stirring the tree-tops. The sultry air threw a languor upon everything—everything except the ardent love and admiration of Captain Bobston for Lucy Heywood.

It was just the season for which he had longed for months past. Seated on the broad porch, beneath the cool shade of the towering oak, within a few feet of his adored object, while the subdued conversation of her mother and Miss Jellaby came through the open window like the pleasant, monotonous humming of bees overhead. Seated thus, what more pleasant situation could be imagined?

"How long is it before you hope you shall be well enough to join General Wayne?" inquired Lucy.

"I *hope* I shall be well enough the next minute, ha! ha! But that undoubtedly is not what you mean. I trust I shall be able to ride my horse about the middle of next week."

"Time enough to do some service. While I would not be so rude, Captain Bobston, as to show any desire to be rid of your presence, yet, as you so frequently express a wish to be able to resume your command, you must not think ill if I join with you."

"Not at all—not at all—of course not. Do not mention it. Your anxiety for me to be at my post, shows me a new trait to admire in your character—the willingness to sacrifice even those we love for the performance of a sacred duty."

The captain delivered himself of this speech in a very impulsive manner, but, at the same time, it was manifest enough that had Lucy entreated him to remain, it would have pleased him far better. In fact, he began to wonder why it was that she always refused to join in with Miss Jellaby, when she begged him so earnestly not to desert them. Furthermore, Lucy was hardly willing to admit that there was any one whom she loved that she had asked to leave her, although the gallant captain seemed to take it for granted that such was the case.

"A noble sentiment that you have uttered, Miss Lucy, and I admire you the more for it."

"I do not see what is so particularly noble about it, especially as it is a sentiment which ought to animate the breast of every one at such times as these."

"Very true again; but then you must admit that there are many who are *not* actuated by such principles."

"I am hardly willing to admit *that* even. I have not seen such persons."

The persistency of Lucy in disagreeing with the captain rather nettled him. He had done his utmost to make his part of the conversation agreeable and interesting to her, and this was the manner in which it was received.

"What course would you recommend, Capt. Bobston?" asked Lucy, after he had referred to the exposed situation of herself and friends.

"While I would willingly die a thousand times in your defence, you must not forget that my wound incapacitates me for duty. I have urged your return to the settlements, but you refuse, and I have come to the conclusion that the claims which my beloved country has upon me are so great that it is my duty to make my way to the village."

"What! desert us?" demanded Lucy, indignantly.

"I have done my most to urge you," replied the captain, growing red in the face, and feeling very uneasy under the withering glance of his companion. "I have done all I can. The true course for you is to make all haste to the village"—

"Just what I always said," interrupted Miss Jellaby, coming out upon the porch, followed by Miss Heywood. "I have just been talking with Mary here, and I think I have about persuaded her into taking the step."

Captain Bobston arose, and obsequiously offered his seat to the two ladies, his injury being such that it did not prevent him from making numerous and graceful obeisances to them.

Mrs. Heywood was a meek, mild-spoken lady, just the opposite of what her husband had been. She was handsome and prepossessing, although upon the shady side of fifty. Her hair was streaked here and there with silver, and she had care-worn lines at the corners of the mouth, which showed plainly indeed what her sufferings had been. She possessed deep, fervent piety, never spoke in a loud tone, and despite the lively, careless, exuberant nature of her daughter, she had infused in her, from her earliest childhood, her own trusting, prayerful reliance upon the great disposer of events. Both were truly and sincerely pious, as was also Miss Jellaby, though it must be confessed, her habit of incessant murmuring and complaint, did not speak well for the comfort and faith of her spirit.

"It gives me great pleasure to hear you talk thus,"

said Captain Bobston, in reply to the remark of the spinster. "It speaks well for your wisdom and prudence."

"If Mary here had only followed my advice, she would never have come to this outlandish country at all, though, I will say, it was not so much her fault as it was the Colonel's. He was always headstrong in anything that entered his head, and you might as well talk to the wind as to hope to persuade him to give up that idea when it had once taken hold of him."

Mrs. Heywood was so accustomed to hearing such remarks as these, that she made no reply, and they rarely affected her in the least. Seating herself, she said, in her usual quiet manner.

"We should have left this place long ago, and I deserve great blame for not doing so."

"I would not remain another night. I would leave this very hour," interrupted the excited soldier.

"There surely can be no need of that. We need apprehend no disturbance during the coming night."

"Perhaps"—

"Heavens and earth! look yonder!" shouted Captain Bobston, excitedly. "What does that mean?"

All eyes were turned in the direction indicated.

"My gracious! they will kill the horse! Just what I always told you!" exclaimed Miss Jellaby, in concert.

Mrs. Heywood, at the first intimation of danger, looked off toward the further end of the clearing, where she saw the two negroes, Pharaoh and Pete, mounted on a horse, which was coming at a tremendous gait toward the house, as if pursued by some terrible foe. An ashy paleness spread over her countenance as she comprehended the alarming circumstances, but the next moment the color came back, and she closed her lips firmly together, and calmly awaited the approach of the terror-stricken messengers. The dark eye of Lucy kindled as she looked across the clearing, and her bosom heaved, and her heart throbbed wildly and painfully as she waited the dreadful tidings. But the first shock of alarm over, she became more collected, showing that among other heritages from the father,

he possessed his coolness and self-possession in the moment of trial.

"Good heavens! Just see them come!" added Captain Bobston, running backward and forward on the porch, totally unmindful of his spinal injury. "Hear them yell, too! Look! they're swinging their hats. Depend upon it, there's Indians at the bottom of that! I know it!"

"You seem frightened!" quietly remarked Lucy.

"I—I—I'm considerably nervous, and the actions of those negroes, I confess, is curious. Indians will be upon us right away! Fly around! Where's a gun? Where's a gun? Heaven save us, why don't you fly around."

"Captain Bobston, you are acting womanly and foolish," said Mrs. Heywood, quietly. "Flying around can avail nothing. Wait till they come up, and hear what they have to say. Perhaps it is nothing at all that need occasion us alarm."

The conviction seemed gradually to work itself into the brain of the captain that he was hardly acting the part of a soldier, and he cooled down somewhat, and impatiently awaited the coming of the negroes.

Such riding and shouting! From the horse's ears to the tip of his tail was a straight line, and the rapid clamping of his hoofs could be heard from the very moment he appeared in sight. Both negroes were swinging their hats, pounding the sides of the animal with their heels, and yelling as if to split their throats. Their speed was terrific, and they were fairly crazy with fear.

On they came, until the foaming, panting beast thundered up, and halted in front of the porch, and the negroes, with wide, extended eyes, and gasping breath, essayed to explain the cause of their intense fright.

"What is it? what is it?" impatiently demanded Captain Bobston, running down from the porch.

"Injins! Injins! Injins!" replied the two negroes in one breath.

"Where? where? What of them? Let's hear at once."

"Gosh all ebertying!" exclaimed Pharaoh, who was the eldest and largest, "dar's five hundred million Injins coming up de creek, in twenty-nine thousand canoes, and dey's gwine for to murder de whole country."

"How came you to see them?" interposed Mrs. Heywood. "Compose yourself, Pharaoh."

"Wal, yer see de way of it, missus, was dis ere way. Me and Pete dar had de hoss here hitched to an old stump a trying for to pull it up, but de plaugy thing wou dn't come. I fastened de hoss, den I took hold his fore leg, and Pete tied a rope round me, and den when I hollered Pete pulled me. I pulled de hoss, and de hoss pulled de stump, but it wan't no use—de ole ting wouldn't budge"—

"I tell you it did budge free, four inches! Wot yer talkin' 'bout?" interrupted Pete.

"See here, nigger, I reckon *I's* de gentleman what's elucidatin' dis subject, and derefore you'll please not interfere," said Pharaoh, turning indignantly toward his companion, still seated behind him. "Wal, yer see de stump wouldn't bulge, and bimebye de hoss got so tired and jaded out, we tought we'd turn him in de woods awhile to rest. So we let him go, and laid down on de ground to stretch our legs.

"Bimeby, I thinks it we wanted to get dat stump up, it war time we war a gwine at it, so I gits up and finds de hoss war strayed off in de woods, and knowin' as how de nigger Pete wan't to be trusted, I sets out for to find him. Wall, dar! dat hoss had got clear off down by de creek, and it took me de longest time to find him. But I found him arter awhile hid behind a tree, and I catches him, and was agwine to mount, when I happened to look frough de trees, and I see a hundred painted Injins jes' landin' in dere canoes. I waitedjis long 'nough to see dat dey were ali comin' ashore, when I put for de clearin' whar I picked up Pete, and we tore for de house like mad."

All stood breathless listeners to this characteristic narration. Miss Jellaby was the first to speak.

"Just what I always told you! I knew it would come

to that when the poor dead Colonel emigrated to these parts."

"Not so bad by any means as we might have expected," said Mrs. Heywood in her usually mild voice. "They are probably a war-party on their way to the ~~Ohio~~, who know nothing at all of our residence here."

"Don't you believe that," replied Bobston, decidedly. "The dogs have stopped on purpose to pay us a visit, and the best thing we can do, is to get out of this neighborhood as quick as the good Lord will let us."

"There can be no question about that, dear mother, but Pharaoh is so frightened that it is more than probable that it was only a single canoe of warriors that he saw. While we are making preparations for moving, wouldn't it be best to send some one down to find out how it is!"

"Decidedly a good idea—decidedly. By all means, let us send one down. We can then have some understanding of the matter," said Captain Bobston. "Let me see, Miss Lucy, who shall we send?"

"I know of no one more competent than yourself Captain Bobston."

"Just so—but—but really, I don't know as I ought to desert the ladies."

"We all prefer that you should go," said Mrs. Heywood, and the captain found, unexpectedly indeed, that he had gotten himself in a tight situation, from which there was no retreat.

"I certainly have the good of you all at heart, and if my injury was of such a nature as to permit. Yes, I will go, I will go."

A spasmodic bravery seemed to take possession all at once of the captain, and he moved about with considerable alacrity, as though eager to perform his self-imposed task.

"I trust to return in the course of an hour or so," said he, "but if I fall," he added, in touching tones, "you will know that it was in the discharge of a holy duty."

"There is no necessity in your incurring any great

risk," said Mrs. Heywood. "Just simply find out the number, if possible, the intentions of the Indians regarding us, and return as speedily as you can. While you are gone, we will make preparations for leaving as soon as you rejoin us."

"I think I will take Pharaoh along with me, as he can direct me to the spot."

"Gosh all eberyting, massa Bobston, it's jis as easy as nuffin for you to find dem. All you're got to do am"—

"Pharaoh, you will go with him," interrupted Mrs. Heywood.

The negro said nothing more, but slid down from his horse and joined the captain. Before starting, each provided himself with a rifle and several charges of powder. There being no cause for any delay, the two set out across the clearing, taking a direction toward the point where the affrighted servants were first descried in their mad flight from their imaginary pursuers.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATIONS FOR FLIGHT.

By this time the afternoon was well advanced. The sun was getting low in the sky, and the line of shadow thrown out by the wood advanced far upon the clearing. A profound stillness reigned, and the alarmed inmates of Col. Heywood's mansion listened in vain for some evidence of the proximity of the dreadful Indians.

The preparations for removal were very simple, and were soon made. There were two horses belonging to the estate, but unfortunately one horse, which had been turned loose in the morning, had wandered off into the woods, and the terror of Pete was too great for his mistress to urge him to seek it. The remaining one was strong, serviceable, fleet of foot, and the superior by far of the other. He was fastened behind the house, while the negro assisted the ladies in their labors.

Although Lucy had manifested the same coolness and presence of mind as her mother, still she by no means felt equally at ease with her. Young, with a buoyant, hopeful nature, she was the more readily impressed by the approaching calamity, and her impatience to leave the mansion was, if possible, even greater than Miss Jellaby's. Her heart beat wildly as she hurried to and fro, and at length unable to restrain her feverish impatience, she ascended to the second story, to keep watch until the return of Captain and Pharaoh.

The two were in sight when she took her station, and she saw them enter the wood and disappear. Then trembling, apprehensive and fearful, her eyes flitted from the edge of the clearing to the creek and back again. The swaying of a tree or a limb startled her, and as the twilight came on she more than once fancied she could see a canoe darting hither and thither in the bed of the creek, the occupants of which were doing their utmost to keep out of sight.

All at once the near report of a rifle broke the impressive stillness, and she sprang to her feet as suddenly as if the bullet had entered her own chamber. Just where the wood ran down to the edge of the creek, about a third of a mile distant, she was certain she could see the faint, bluish spire rising and dissipating in the clear air. But, for a half hour more, nothing was heard or seen. Already the wood was growing dim and indistinct in the gathering darkness, when Lucy's attention was arrested by a dark object coming across the clearing, in a direct line with the house.

This object was seen so distinctly that there could be no mistake about it. A second glance showed that it was a man, and he was running at the top of his speed. She bent her head and peered with an intense eagerness through the gloom, and her heart almost stopped beating as she detected in the appearance and movement of the approaching person the peculiarities of an Indian. She was vastly relieved, however, upon his coming closer, to find that it was the negro, Pharaoh.

"Yet, why was he alone? Where was Captain Bobston? What meant this hasty, excited manner? These and similar questions, she asked herself, as she bounded down the stairs to meet the returning servant. Her mother and aunt already encountered him on the porch.

"Why, are you alone?" asked the former.

"O, Missis Heywood!" exclaimed the terror-stricken fellow, "de Injins have got him! De Injins have got him!"

"Just what I always told you!" replied Miss Jellaby, raising her hands, and turning her head on one side as she spoke. "That's what comes of not taking my advice, sister Mary. You never should have allowed the Colonel—poor dead man!—to live out here, where these heathens live and rage."

"Pray, how was it?" asked Lucy, in a horrified whisper, taking hold of Pharaoh's arm.

"Gosh all eberything, missis, I hardly know myself. But de Iujins—and dar's tousands of 'em—have got 'im, and dey're givin' ob him *fits*. Dey're running sticks frough him and settin' dem on fire, and peelin' ob his hide all down his back!"

The listeners for a moment were struck dumb with terror as they heard of Captain Bobston's awful fate. Mrs. Heywood, who realized that in this crisis she was to be the guide and director of the others, recovered her self-possession, and said, in her quiet voice.

"We must leave at once. The Indians will probably be here immediately. Sister, are you ready?"

"Oh, ye-, I suppose so. Only to think, that after being brought up in Philadelphia, where everything that the heart could wish was given me, and where I never knew what it was to be treated unkindly—only to think, I say, that I should come to *this*."

"But do not talk so, dear sister, you know it cannot be helped."

"I know, I know; but then why did we come to this heathenish country? I always told you it would be so."

It is the just punishment of Heaven for our sin in coming here."

"Gosh a'mighty, Missis Heywood, if she wants to stay here let her stay, and we'll go. But I tinks if we's agwine we hain't got much time to spare."

"You speak the truth, Pharaoh. Lucy, is there anything to detain you further?"

"No, mother; but, as we're going into the woods, wouldn't it be best to take a few provisions with us?"

"Yes, I will do so."

The horse was still secured behind the house. As it was impossible for him to carry the three ladies, it was wisely determined that none should attempt to ride, but that he should be saddled only with what it was necessary they should take with them. This consisted of a few blankets and clothing, to which Mrs. Heywood had determined to add a sack containing a quantity of food. By this arrangement the load of the animal was so slight as not to impede him in the least, and the females being totally unencumbered, all would be enabled to make rapid progress through the wood.

While Mrs. Heywood was occupied within the house in collecting and preparing her provisions, Pharaoh was holding the horse, and Pete, Lucy, and Miss Jellaby were standing beside him. Tortured by such anxiety, the delay seemed unnecessarily long, and the three were unable to restrain their impatience.

"It does appear that mother is too tardy."

"She always was so when a child. How often our poor dead mother, that is dead and gone, used to talk to her about it. So much did she say that I thought she had been entirely cured of it; but it seems that she has not. Oh, dear, dear!"

"Specs like enough missis is gwine to mix de bread and cook it, and, bimeby, she'll be hollerin' to Pharaoh to come and kindle de fire for her. Gosh a'mighty! if de Injins come white she's in dar, dey'll cook de bread for her. Yah! yah!"

"Hush, hush!" admonished Lucy. "They may come,

Pharaoh, so you run to the corner of the house, and keep watch."

"Lor', Miss Lucy, what'll become ob de hoss?"

"We can manage him, and Pete will remain with us."

"Bress your sou', Pete don't know nuffin' 'bout hosses. Head too thick for him to larn."

"Well, I know enough at any rate; I know enough, so do not wait any longer."

"Yes, for land's sake, go, Pharaoh," added Miss Jellaby. "I'm sure you'll see a dozen Injuns before you've been there ten minutes."

Thus admonished, the negro stole away on tip-toe, as if he were approaching some couched prize and fearful of alarming it. Passing around to the front of the house, he took his station, where he had as extensive a view of the broad clearing as the gloom of early evening would permit. He had stood here scarcely a minute when he came rushing back.

"Dey's comin'! dey's comin'! a whole lot of 'em!"

"Why didn't you alarm mother?" demanded Lucy, running toward him.

"Just what I always told you," added Miss Jellaby, as they both hurried around the corner of the house.

"Where are they?" asked Lucy, halting and looking wildly about her. "I don't see anything of them."

"Yonder, out in front of the house—right dar!"

"There's no one there, Pharaoh; you must have been mistaken."

"Gosh! I b'lieve I was. Sorry to 'sturb you."

"You should be careful, Pharaoh; you should indeed. I feel sick from the excessive fright I was thrown into."

"Sorry; I'll look sharper next time."

Lucy retraced her steps, faint almost to falling, from the terrible anxiety which had tormented her for the last hour or two. She was talking with Miss Jellaby, who was on the point of entering the house for the purpose of bringing her sister out, when Pharaoh again made his appearance.

"Have you seen anything?" asked Lucy, as she came up.

"I dunno, but I thinks I has. I doesn't want to skeer you, but I has a mighty big s'picion dar's some Injins out dar on de clearin'. I've seen *shadders* ruuning around backward and forward, and I tinks if Pete should come out wid me, we cou'd soon tell for sartin."

"Just what I was going to advise. Go at once, Pete, and keep a bright lookout. What can possibly detain mother so long, aunty?"

"The dear knows, I can't tell. She always was so slow in her movements. I remember hearing mother once say when Mary was a little girl, she believed that if the house should break out all over in a fire, she would never leave her room until she had the last pin in her dress."

"As we are wait'ng, the time perhaps seems much greater to us than it otherwise would. Here comes both Pharaoh and Pete. What can alarm them so?"

"We seed 'em this time, *sure!*" said Pharaoh.

"How many?"

"Fifty tous"—

"No, dar ain't but *one*. You can see him easy enough."

Both Lucy and Miss Jellaby hurried back with the negroes, feeling certain that there must now be some ground for their alarm. Passing the corner of the house, they were brought to a halt by discovering, several hundred feet away, the outlines of a human figure. He was standing erect, and approaching, but at such a tardy rate as to show that he was uncertain of the reception awaiting him. As he came closer, a curious head-dress, with a large dangling plume, could be seen.

"Don't fire," whispered Lucy to the trembling negro by her side, who was nervously fumbling his rifle. "Perhaps he is a friendly Indian."

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTAIN BOBSTON'S RECONNOISSANCE.

The haste with which Captain Bobston sped across the clearing with the negro Pharaoh, was caused more by self-interest than by courage and concern for those he left behind him. He knew that he was a plain target for any lurking Indian in the edge of the wood, while, if he could only enter the protecting darkness of the latter, his comfort and sense of security would be greatly increased. In fact, he kept his sable companion upon a continual trot, until, when nearly across the open space, his walk became much slower, and finally halted and listened, waving his hand to Pharaoh to preserve silence.

"Wot's—wot's de matter?" asked the latter, in trembling accents.

"Nothing, I am only listening. Do you hear anything?"

"Gosh a'mity, sh'd tink I did."

"What is it?"

"De Injins!" he answered, in a ghastly whisper. "I hear 'em walkin' all frough de trees, waitin' for to catch us."

"Shut your mouth," commanded Captain Bobston, angrily. "You hear nothing at all, and I want no more of your nonsense."

"S'pose so, but gorry! I *tinks* I see dar eyes shinin' 'mong de trees dar like balls ob fire," muttered the negro to himself, looking toward the forest, which loomed up like a dark wall of blackness before them.

Captain Bobsten trembled scarcely less than the negro behind him, when he resumed his way. Around him were numerous stumps, left from trees felled during the preceding summer, and some half dozen of these could be discerned through the gloom, bearing a won'terful resemblance to a crouching human form. With his imagin-

ation constantly excited by the negro positively affirming that one of them was an Indian that he had seen squat down for the purpose of taking aim, and that behind the others he could discover the blazing eyeball of the different savages, all waiting, panther like, for their prey to come within their grasp, it can scarcely be wondered that the timid captain should experience considerable trepidation. The falling of a leaf, the rustling of his own footsteps, sent a cold shiver through him, and caused a furtive glance to ascertain the best point of retreat. More than once he was on the point of breaking across the clearing at the top of his speed, caring not what became of Pharaoh, or those whom he had left at the house.

On the very edge of the wood Captain Bobston halted and gazed back. He counted the shadowy forms of five stumps within his field of vision, and scrutinized each for several minutes to satisfy himself that it was not likely to rise up in the form of a man and rush after him. It is morally certain that had a cat given utterance to a waul, or a dog rushed by at this moment, both he and Pharaoh would have dropped to the ground and fainted out of sheer terror. As the former entered the wood, and the dry leaves rattled beneath his tread, he again halted. Hearing nothing, however, he pressed forward until he had penetrated several hundred yards into the wood, when seeing nothing yet of any light or sign of a camp-fire, he turned to Pharaoh.

"Which direction must we take from here?" he asked.

"Go'ry! how do you s'pose dis chile knows?"

"Well, where are the Indians? Where is it you saw them?"

"Why, 'long de creek; dey was jes' comin' up wid dar vnoes."

The captain had been proceeding in a direction parallel with the stream, and he now diverged to the right so as to encounter it. Again enjoining secrecy and caution upon the negro, he moved forward so carefully that even the trained ear of a Shawane would have scarcely detected his footsteps. Beneath the trees the dark was so

great that a man cou'd not have been discovered at a greater distance than ten or twelve feet.

Captain Bobston had not proceeded far in the course indicated, when his attention was arrested by the reflection of fire among the branches of the trees. From where it stood it looked as though a mass of burning twigs and brush was walled in such a manner that its light was thrown upward against the limbs above. The cause of this was obvious. The banks of the creek being several feet in height, and the camp-fire of the savages having been kindled below it, the blaze itself, as a consequence, could only be seen from the water or the other side of the stream.

Here, beyond a doubt, was the Indians, and it only needed a nearer approach to determine their actual number. Yet, Captain Bobston hesitated considerable to make that approach. After a moment's thought, a bright idea struck him.

"They are there!" he exclaimed in a whisper to Pharaoh.

"Yes, I s'pose dey ar."

"And it only remains to find out their number."

"Dar *precise* number I s'pose you means. 'Cause you know I told you afore 'bout how many dar war."

"Just so, Pharaoh, and now you just slip up without making any noise, and count them, while I'll wait here till you come back."

"Gorry mighty! I's seen 'em afore. Wot do I want to see 'em agin for?"

"To count them; to get at their number."

"But, bress you, dis chile doesn't know how to count, only *one*, and *two more*, and I know dar am more dan dat."

"Fudge, you can count five or six, I am sure."

"No, I can't nuther. Hope massa Bobston ain't *afeard* 'cause if he is dis chile will crawl up and take a look."

It occurred to him that his influence over the negro was considerably more limited than he supposed, and that the only recourse for him was to make the reconnoisance himself. So without losing any more time, he said.

"You remain here, Pharaoh, until I return. I am going

to make the examination myself, and do not, under any circumstances, leave this spot till I give you permission. If you do, I will not be answerable for your safety."

"But s'pose de Injins comes after me?"

"No fears of that. Keep where you are, and it will not be long before I shall be with you again."

With this parting admonition, Captain Bobston moved away through the wood until he had lost sight of the negro. Approaching the camp-fire with great caution, he found the nature of the ground and the density of the undergrowth was such that he could not obtain his coveted view of the savages, except from below the bank. There were two ways in which this could be accomplished, either by crossing the creek and passing down the opposite side, or by entering the stream and floating past. He chose the latter plan as the only one guaranteeing any certainty of accomplishing its end.

Upon reaching the water, he came upon three canoes, evidently belonging to those around the camp-fire, and being pretty well satisfied that the savages had halted for the night, he had no fear in entering one and pushing out in the stream. To work it up the creek was very difficult, as it was imperatively necessary that he should make no noise. The only way in which he succeeded in doing it, was by means of the overhanging branches upon the opposite side. The light of the camp-fire was thrown clear across the stream, so that also he ran considerable risk of being discovered.

Holding on thus to the undergrowth and limbs of the trees, Captain Bobston succeeded at length in gaining a sight of the savages. He counted fourteen, lounging in all attitudes, around the fire. The most were smoking, and from their appearance he judged that they were upon their way to unite with the grand Indian army then concentrating, and had halted at this spot because a good site was offered. Whether they knew of the proximity of Colonel Heywood's mansion, of course he had no means of determining. There might be several on their way to it at that moment, and he shuddered as he looked upon their

paint-begrimed visages, and the dreadful weapons of death which they carried wth them.

Captain Bobston had just seated himself again in the canoe, and was on thepoint of floating down stream, when a rifle was discharged rom the opposite side, seemingly at the very point where the clearing and woods came down to the creek. The sky being still quite light, the smoke was plainly seen as it rose from the muzzle of the gun, so that Lucy Heywood was right in locating the one who had fired it, although from the nature of the case, it cou'd not be possible that the vapor had also been visible to her.

The discharge of the piece appeared to have killed one of the savages around the camp-fire, for a sharp, agonized yell was followed by most of their number dashing down the bank of the stream toward tie point from which the fatal shot had come. Captain Eobston caught a glimpse of a flying fugitive, who sped off on the clearing with the speed of the wind, pursued by the infuriated Indians, when all immediately disappeared from sight.

Waiting until perfect silence eigned, he paddled across the stream, landed, and made his way to the spot where he had left Pharaoh. As might be expected, the negro had disappeared, he having fledat the report of the gun, under the conviction that Captain Bobston had been taken, himself discovered and pursued by the entire force of Indians.

While searching for the servant, the soldier stumbled upon the bead-dress or plumes of an Indian, and under the belief that it might serve him as a disguise, in case he encountered any of his foes, he placed them upon his head, throwing his own military cap from him, and, thus protected, he ventured out upon the clearing, and approached the house. Its unusual stillness excited his wonder, and he began to fear that it had already been entered by the savages. He approached slowly and stealthily, when he caught a glimpse of the alarmed females, grouped at one end of the house. Coming steadily forward he called out the name of Lucy.

"Why, it's Captain Bobston," said the latter in astonishment to her companions. "We took you for an Indian."

"Undoubtedly caused by my picturesque head-dress."

"How did you escape?"

"Escape—eh? what do you mean?" asked the captain, in considerable surprise.

"How did you get away from the Indians? Pharaoh said they had captured and was torturing you."

"Oh! ah! yes! I understand! how did I get out of their hands? Simply by a desperate effort, though I was compelled to slay some five or six of the disgusting savages before it was accomplished."

"Dear sus, Captain Bobston," chimed Miss Jellaby, "Sister Mary is in the house, preparing us some bread to take with us, and we do not know when she is ever coming out. She always was a slow creature, for all my poor mother, that is dead and gone, was always reproving her for it. Won't you go and tell her to hurry?"

"Of course, anything to oblige the ladies," responded the valiant captain, springing upon the porch, and grasping the door latch.

At this instant, a suppressed scream from Mrs. Heywood was heard, and the patterning of feet over the floor. Captain Bobston was meditating whether it would not be the safer plan to withdraw and rejoin his friends, when the door was suddenly pulled open from within, and himself seized by the throat and lurled to the floor.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW ACCESSION.

Our readers must bear with us while we go back somewhat in our story, in order that the events which we have taken upon ourselves to chronicle, may be presented in the order necessary to a complete understanding.

At the very moment Captain Bobston was reconnoitering the Indians, who had encamped along the creek, another person was making all speed through the woods toward the Heywood mansion. He came from the direction of the settlement, and had hardly halted a moment since starting. He was a young man, attired in the garb of a hunter, with strong, well-formed limbs, a handsome, prepossessing face, which bore upon it the stamp of refined, gentlemanly feeling in place of that coarse brutality which too often disfigures the border hunter. In his right hand trailed a long, formidable rifle, while the buck-horn of an Indian knife protruded from the girdle which bound his waist.

His long, rapid strides carried him swiftly through the forest, and darkness had hardly set in, when he struck the creek which flowed by the Heywood house. Following this up, he soon came in sight of the latter, speeding across the clearing, reaching it just as Lucy and Miss Jellaby had gone with the negroes to meet Captain Bobston. Seeing a window open, he sprang in just as Mrs. Heywood approached, with the intention of closing it. This startling entrance caused her to utter a slight scream, but her fears were instantly quieted by his speaking.

"Is that you, William?" she asked, as she recognized the voice.

"Yes, Mrs. Heywood; where are the rest of the family? and why are you moving around in the dark in this manner?"

"We are preparing to fly, for the Indians at last have come."

"I heard a party would soon be in this vicinity, and I made all haste from the block-house to warn you. Hello! who is at the door?"

"Some one of our folks, perhaps. Just look."

Winslow--such was his name--advanced, and boldly pulled the door wide open. Catching a glimpse of the dangling plumes of Captain Bobston, he hurled him at once to the floor, and was about to dispatch him, when fortunately he discovered his identity.

"I beg pardon, captain, for such usage," said he, as he assisted him to his feet. "I mistook you for an Indian."

"And how, in the name of common sense, came ^{you} here?" demanded the soldier, in considerable of ^{heat}.

"I arrived but a minute ago, and came in ^{by} the window."

"A pretty way to enter another person's house."

"Come, come, captain," interrupted Mrs. Heywood. "Do not be rash in your words. I am sure we are glad enough indeed to meet William at such a time as this."

It was manifest that Captain Bobston looked upon the new comer with little favor. He had met young Winslow before, both at the settlement and at the house of Mrs. Heywood, and he recognized in him a formidable rival in the affections of Lucy. The hunter being stationed at the garrison, had not the leisure of the Captain with which to prosecute his suit, so that his visits were less frequent and lengthy in their character. Learning, however, on the day upon which our story opens, from a friendly Indian, that a body of savages intended sacking the Heywood mansion that night, and slaying the inmates, he was given liberty to make all haste and warn them; and, as we have shown, he faithfully performed his duty, arriving at the house at a most critical moment.

"Mrs. Heywood," said Captain Bobston, somewhat mollified, "Miss Jellaby and your daughter are greatly concerned over your delay, and I was sent to ascertain the reason."

"Very true; I was detained much longer than usual. We will go at once."

She passed out on the porch as she spoke, where she waited until her two friends followed her, when she quietly locked the door behind, with as much coolness and precision as her sister had given her credit for.

The accession to their number was regarded with great surprise by those who were waiting, but when they learned that it was William Winslow, the gallant young hunter, their elation can hardly be depicted. Winslow paused long enough to explain to Lucy the cause of his being

present, (during which Captain Bobston raved at the delay of *some* folks), when he said aloud.

"Let us be off at once friends. All, I suppose, will walk. Pharaoh, you will take charge of the horse, and keep a good watch over the articles upon his back, among which are some provisions just added. Pete, you keep to the rear, with the ladies. Captain, where will you choose your position?"

"Where there is the most danger, sir. I will guard the ladies."

"All right. I will pilot the way. Come on, and be careful of making too much noise."

The hunter strode forward as he spoke, behind him came Pharaoh, leading the horse, and he was followed by Pete, Captain Bobston, and the ladies, all walking at a rapid gait.

None spoke until they entered the wood, where the darkness being greater, they "closed up" more and proceeded with less haste, owing partly to that increased sense of security experienced from being in the protecting gloom of the forest.

Matters were progressing favorably, when all were brought to a stand still by an exclamation from Miss Jellaby.

"Just as sure as you live, I have left my snuff-box behind," said she. "How provoking, too, when we are in such a hurry. But it always was so. You recollect, sister, the time our poor dead mother took us on a visit to her cousins, how I forgot my silk handkerchief, and that too, when I had gone half the way?"

"Yes, but surely you are willing to get along without it at this time. An hour's delay may be fatal."

"Law, sus, it won't take an hour to get it, will it? How long did you stay to prepare that bread and meat?"

"Where is your box?" asked Winslow, who saw that the readiest way of ending the matter was by returning for it.

"On the mantlettry, in the same room where you were."

"Wait here until I come back."

"But"—

He darted away like a shot, and sped across the clearing. The night by this time was well advanced, and it was not until he had gone half the distance that he could see the shadowy outlines of the house looming up before him.

His experience in Indian warfare admonished him to be careful in approaching it, even though but a few minutes had elapsed since he had been within.

Accordingly he walked completely around it, carefully examining the door and windows, and listening for any sound. Nothing was seen or heard to alarm him, and he could not help smiling when his eye fell upon the window which Mrs. Heywood had allowed to remain open, while she had taken so much pains to secure the door. In the former he entered in the same manner that he had done before.

It was this room which contained the mantleshelf, and Winslow commenced groping around, deeming it hardly prudent or worth his time to strike a light. He experienced some difficulty at first in his blind searching, but at length his hand touched the shelf, and he ran it along so rapidly that the box slid off upon the floor. At this instant, his trained ear detected the sound of voices upon the outside, and he instantly bent all his faculties into the acutest attention.

The guttural exclamation he had caught was from the throat of an Indian, and their footsteps were now distinctly audible as they passed around the house, searching for some means of entrance. His heart rose to his throat as he heard them try the door, but this was too firmly secured to yield without a crash, which they seemed anxious to avoid, evidently believing that the family within were soundly asleep.

While still listening, the tufted head of an Indian appeared at the window and glared within. Outlined against the dim sky, its proportions seemed gigantic, while he fancied the phosphorescent gleaming of the eyeballs illuminated the entire room. The head remained stationary

moment, and was then followed by the shoulders and body of the Indian, who landed on the floor as lightly as a cat.

Another and another followed, until the hunter had seen five enter the window. These commenced shuffling around the room, striking the chairs and wall, and finally one bumped his head against his. Although it seemed to Winslow that his own skull was cracked, he carefully restrained any exclamation, and the savage mistaking him for one of his companions, passed on, until he was brought up by the door communicating with the upper story.

While standing here another of the Indians attempted to strike a light with a box and tinder, which he had evidently obtained from some white man. Should he succeed in doing this, Winslow knew the consequences would be fatal to him. Accordingly he managed, apparently by accident, to strike the elbow of the Indian, and knock the tinder from his hand.

The savage gave vent to an exclamation of anger, while the one who stood at the foot of the stairs commenced ascending it.

The cellar also communicated with this room, and one of the Indians now discovered the door to it. Under the belief that the stairs led above, and anxious to be there as soon as the other, he took a long step upward in the empty air. Winslow heard him as he went growling and bumping downward, striking every step in his descent, until he rolled headlong to the bottom.

The outcries of the savage brought several to his assistance, and the hunter concluded that it was a favorable time to make his exit.

Before doing so, however, he searched on the floor until he found the snuff-box. It had been opened and part of the contents spilled. Closing it carefully, he placed it in his pocket, and bounded out of the window. The attention of the Indians being pre-occupied, they did not notice him, or, if they did, they mistook him for one of their number, and he hurried toward the woods without attracting any notice.

As might be expected, he found his friends waiting and anxious. Handing the box to Miss Jellaby, he merely remarked.

"There's your snuff-box. Let us hurry forward."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST VICTIM.

The fugitives pressed eagerly forward. The woods were "open" in most places, and the horse moved without difficulty. Pharaoh maintained his position beside him, unwilling that any one else should infringe upon what he considered his sacred rights.

Winslow was too intent upon his duty, that of guiding the party, and too fully alive to his responsibility to pay any attention to those behind him.

Captain Bobston found occasion to whisper a word or two to Lucy, while Miss Jellaby now and then, gave utterance to some complaining or philosophical observation.

In this manner the party had penetrated some two or three miles in the forest, when the undergrowth became more dense, and their progress, as a consequence, considerably retarded. The silence which had been enjoined by Winslow was so far regarded that the snatches of conversation were carried on only in whispers. The fugitives following their leader, changed their course more and more to the left, until the glimmer of the creek was discerned through the trees.

"Gosh all eberyting!" exclaimed Pharaoh, "dis hoss must hab a drink, Massa Winslow. He's been whinnin' for water for de last half hour."

"Drive him down to the creek there, and return as soon as possible."

The negro vaulted upon the back of the animal, and with a "whoa-dare! mind yourself now!" set off at a can-

ter through the trees, while the party stood closely together and awaited his return.

"Do you think we can reach the settlement by morning?" inquired Miss Jellaby.

"Hardly, the distance is so great; but, if nothing unusual occurs, I trust that to-morrow noon will see us there."

"Oh dear! oh dear! why did we ever come to this country?" wailed the spinster. "If the Lord ever spares me to get out of it, I shall never return."

"None of us, I think, will wish to do that, while the affairs are so unsettled," said Mrs. Heywood.

"They will soon be settled, depend upon that," remarked Captain Bobston, with considerable fervor. "Mad Anthony is about ready to strike his grand blow."

"And only waiting, I suppose, for your arrival," added Lucy, in a low tone.

"I shall soon be with him. My wound is about healed; but, of course, I would not desert the party at such a crisis as this. As soon as we reach the settlement, I shall take my departure at once."

In the meantime, Pharaoh had driven his horse several yards into the creek, where he was busy quaffing his fill, the negro engaged in the meantime devising the best means of keeping his own feet out of the water. The horse having quenched his thirst, raised his head, and with a sigh of calm enjoyment, looked around over the surface of the creek. All at once he gave vent to a snort of alarm, drew back, and wheeled with such suddenness that Pharaoh barely saved himself from being precipitated into the current. As the affrighted animal dashed up the bank, the terror-stricken negro glanced behind him, and caught a glimpse of some dark body rapidly approaching the shore. He never drew rein until he had passed round to the rear of the waiting and excited party of fugitives. Here, in a few words, he explained what had occurred.

A whispered consultation took place. Captain Bobston was in favor of an instant retreat into the woods, in which opinion he was supported by Miss Jellaby, while Winslow was determined to ascertain the nature and extent of the

danger, so as to adopt proper measures to meet or avoid it. To the chagrin of the captain, it was finally decided that the advice of the young hunter should be followed.

"Remain where you are," said the latter, "and I will return in a few minutes."

"Do not expose yourself unnecessarily," said Lucy, in a tone intended only for his ears, but which was overheard by Captain Bobston.

"No exposure at all," quickly spoke the latter. "No exposure at all—mere child's play."

Lucy drew back somewhat abashed that another party should have heard her earnest, passionate utterance, while Winslow enjoining silence and caution upon all, moved rapidly away in the direction of the creek.

There were but several hundred yards intervening between the party and the creek, so that from the start he progressed with the utmost stealth and circumspection. When he became sensible of the proximity of the stream, he was tempted to return back, and warn his friends to retreat further into the woods; but, upon second thought he moved on, deeming his time too precious for any retrogression.

The bank of the creek was some six or eight feet in height, the edge being very abrupt. As the hunter stood, its outline was plainly discernible against the clear sky beyond, from which he judged that the opposite side of the stream was much more depressed.

Winslow paused a dozen yards or so distant, debating whether to descend the bank or examine the intervening ground. Should he allow a foe to get in his rear, his escape would not only be cut off, but the safety of the little party be placed in the most imminent peril. From Pharaoh's confused account he was led to believe there was not more than one Indian in the vicinity, much doubting, at the same time, whether it was any savage at all that had startled him.

While still debating with himself, he saw the tufted head of a savage rise above the bank, and remain stationary a moment, as if its owner were gazing round in quest

of some object. Feeling that his own person was secure from observation, Winslow did not move behind a tree, as he would have done had there been daylight in the woods.

The head of the Indian suddenly dropped out of sight and in a moment reappeared a few feet further to his right. Here, as the hunter watched it, he saw it rise until the shoulders were visible, when the arms were seen to move, as if busily engaged at something. The first intimation received of the nature of this, was the discharge of the savage's rifle, and the whizzing of the bullet within an inch of his own face. Then, as quick as lightning, it flashed upon Winslow, that he had stood where the moon shone down upon him, and had been seen by his foe.

He comprehended all instantly, and taking a quick aim fired his own piece, and the Indian whisked out of sight with a suspicious dexterity. The former ran forward to ascertain the effect of his shot. Down near the edge of the creek, he saw a dark body rolling and writhing in its death agony, but giving vent to no groan nor expression of pain. It was a sad sight, but a merited fate.

Simultaneous with the report of the Indian's piece, Winslow heard a scream from one of the ladies, and not knowing what had occurred, he made all haste to the party to ascertain the cause of the outcry. To his dismay, he found Miss Jellaby, with her head in the lap of her sister, moaning as it suffering the most torturing pain.

"What has occurred?" he asked of those surrounding her.

"Did not some one fire at you?" inquired Lucy.

"Yes, an Indian did, but I shot him, although he came nigh shooting me."

"His bullet, I am afraid, struck my aunt. She uttered a scream, and fell to the ground, the very instant the gun was fired."

"Heavens! is it possible?" and then kneeling beside the suffering woman, he asked, in a tender voice, "Where are you wounded, Miss Jellaby?"

"Here, just below my shoulder. Oh, I always told you int so."

"It must be examined and attended to at once."

And without further delay, the hunter commenced to of loosen the dress with the intention of dressing the wound, cre when Miss Jellaby spitefully thrusting his hand away, and rising bolt upright, said in her loud, sharp tones of indignation.

"I'm astonished, William Winslow! yes, astonished! What do you mean, sir, in taking advantage of a poor lady's helplessness? Say, sir, what do"—

"But I protest, Miss Jellaby. Your situation makes it"—

"Not a word, sir! Oh, you unfeeling man! This is what comes of living in this heathenish country! I always told you so—oh! oh! oh!"

And covering her face, the deeply insulted and offend- ed lady sobbed so hysterically that all efforts failed to ing soothe her. Chagrined, indignant, amused and perplex- ed, Winslow drew back and resigned her to the care of her female friends; but as her moaning continued, and he became convinced that her life was really in danger, he said to Mrs. Heywood.

"It is imperatively necessary that her injury be"attend- ed to without delay. Please do it yourself, as I have unconsciously shocked her."

The sensible lady could not forbear a smile as she re- plied.

"Lucy and I have done so, and have been unable to discover any wound. Nothing beyond her modesty has been injured, and *that* wound I guess is not mortal."

"I am glad to hear it. It must have been the fright occasioned by the report of the gun."

"No, it was not, either. It was the wind of the bullet, and you know nothing about it. I have recovered now, and that without any help of yours."

"Aunty, you are ungrateful," interposed Lucy, "when William has exposed himself to so much danger simply upon our account."

"As there seems to be no further occasion for delay," you interrupted Captain Bobston, "the best thing we can do is to make all haste toward the settlement. Mr. Winslow, as you appear to have taken upon yourself the charge to of affairs, we await your directions. Are we to follow this

creek, or to take a cut through the woods?" "I did intend to use the stream as our guide, but since of this occurrence it would be hardly safe to do so until we have learned whether there are any more foes along its bank. As you have had considerable experience in woodcraft, suppose, captain, you make the examination yourself?"

"I would be perfectly willing to do so—in fact, I could hardly let you to go alone; but I really don't think it necessary, Mr. Winslow."

"I do; I will be back in an instant."

The young hunter, without any more words, moved through the woods, in the direction of the stream. Feeling well assured that all danger for the present was gone he walked to the very edge of the bank and looked down. The dark body, now stiff and motionless, was discernible he stretched out upon the ground, but no sign of life was he visible. All was silent as the grave.

As he gazed sadly down toward the creek, he reflected that the drama in which he was to be a participant, had begun but a few hours before, and here was a human life already sacrificed. How many more would be yielded up ere the drama closed, who could tell? How many of that party of seven would escape from the danger which now menaced them, the great Ruler alone knew. The distance to the settlement, the haven of rest and security, was comparatively slight; but slight as it was, the distance was made up of miles of wilderness, wherein lurked the red man, who hesitated at no deed of blood, and to whom the innocence of childhood or the helplessness of womanhood, were but the incentives to the work of his ferocity and death.

And exposed to this dreadful fate was the dearest object of his thought; she of whom he had dreamed and

meditated for months ; whom, as it were, he had "worshipped from afar," while his more audacious rival, Captain Bobston, had advanced boldly to her shrine, and, as he feared, had completely eclipsed all pretensions of his. But during the last hour or two he had witnessed enough to awaken hope in his heart, and to throw doubts upon the belief which had caused him so much anxiety and apprehension.

Winslow's reverie lasted but a few moments. His situation was such that he felt he had no time to indulge in any train of meditation when those who depended upon him were waiting for his counsel and guidance. Taking another hasty survey of the creek, he was about to retrace his steps, when his attention was arrested and transfixed by the sight of that very thing which he most dreaded to see.

Moving swiftly along the stream, close to the opposite shore, was visible a long, dark object, which his experienced eye at once told him was a canoe full of Indians. Whether they were aware of the presence of the party of whites, of course, he had no means of determining ; but one thing was certain, they were going in the same direction, and it would be tempting fate to carry out his first intention—that of following the stream.

He watched the canoe until it faded from sight in the distance, and then he retraced his steps.

He found his friends ready and waiting. Miss Jellaby had entirely recovered, and seemed to have forgotten all cause of offence against the gallant young hunter. The latter deemed it not best to say anything of the canoe he had seen. He merely remarked that it was hardly prudent to pursue the creek, and once more the fugitives struck into the woods leading to the settlement.

CHAPTER VII.

STORM STAYED.

The sky, which hitherto had been clear and unobscured now became overcast, and every appearance betokened a coming storm. A bank of clouds, which for several hours had lain in the horizon, swept swiftly up toward the zenith, and the light of the moon grew pitiful and uncertain. The muttering peals of thunder, faint and distant at first, grew louder, and came nigher each moment. Through the ragged edges of the black clouds the red lightning quivered and streamed continually, followed now and then by an explosion like the booming of a cannon.

Several large drops of rain warned the fugitives that if they desired shelter, they had but a very short time in which to seek it. The cool air, which blew in gusts through the forest, made them draw their clothing more closely around them and added an impetus to their footsteps. Pharaoh had mounted the horse, and kept him on a rapid walk, resolutely refusing to allow Pete a seat behind him. Winslow took the lead, Miss Jellaby came next, followed by Mrs. Heywood, Lucy, and Captain Bobston.

Within a short distance of the creek, in a sort of valley or hollow, the young hunter knew of the existence of a cave, where he had frequently rested, when hunting, and he now made all haste thither. Sheltered by this, the most furious storm m^{ight} rage around, and cause them no harm or inconvenience. It was not until the drops were patterning quite rapidly that Winslow sprang down the hollow and shouted for the others to follow. As they entered the mouth of the cavern, a perfect deluge come on.

"Hurry in, all of you," called the guide, his voice rising barely above the tempest.

Pharaoh attempted to ride in upon the back of his ani-

mal, but the entrance was so small that he was swept off, while the horse passed on in. At the same instant, the lightning blazed forth with such fury that the cave was lit up, as if at noonday, and the cowering fugitives saw each other's faces pale with terror. The lightning, like a spear of the most intense brightness, shot straight downward in front of the cave, and striking a massive oak, burned down its solid length, with a concussion like the shock of an earthquake. As the subtle element seemed to explode in the very centre of the tree, with all its tremendous power, the splinters and fragments were scattered through the air to the very feet of the fugitives.

There was something grand and sublime in this display of the terrific power of the elements—the floods of descending water, the reverberating booming and sharp explosion of thunder, the dazzling serpentine illumination of lightning, the sighing wind, and the occasional glimpse of the tree-tops swaying wildly backward and forward, like the heads of giants, tossing hither and thither in their agony.

"How terrible, and yet how gloriously beautiful," said a subdued voice at Winslow's elbow. As the hunter turned his head, a flash of lightning illuminated the gloom, and he saw the white, up-turned face of Lucy Heywood. It was not blanched by fear, but the expression chastened and softened by the impressive evidence of almighty power that was going on around her.

"There is always a charm about a thunderstorm to me," replied the hunter, "although to so many such grandeur induces terror only. The reverberating thunder sounds like the rattling of chariot wheels over the courts of Heaven, and such near explosions as this, seems like the discharge of one of its great pieces of ordnance. I can stand here all night, and witness such a scene at this."

"And so could I," added Lucy, enthusiastically; "and I will remain here as long as you do."

As she spoke, she slid her arm within that of Winslow's, and the latter, hardly conscious of what he did, drew her closely to him. It was the first time he had stood in so

blissful proximity to the girl, and his sensations instantly became such, that he felt certain he would not wish to change his position for half-a-dozen nights, much less for a single one, as he had just remarked.

In the pauses of the thunder they managed to exchange words, but, when half uttered, they were frequently drowned by the deafening crash, and they waited sometimes a long time for another lull, that they might finish the remarks thus interrupted. Upon one of these occasions, when they were standing silent and thoughtful, their souls thrilled to very center with the grand display of mighty power, a gleam of lightning revealed the form of Captain Bobston, standing beside them.

"Wouldn't it be best to come further in the cave?" he called, in a trumpet-like voice.

Lucy merely shook her head, until the lightning revealed her reply to him:

"You are exposing yourself too much, Miss Lucy; come in."

She turned her head without deigning a reply. The storm had now spent its fury, and subsided as rapidly as it arose, and the fall of the rain ceased altogether, although the gusts that still swept through the forest brought down torrents of rain from the trees. The darkness was intense.

Winslow turned and entered the cavern with Lucy leaning upon his arm, feeling every inch of the way before advancing. All were silent until he spoke, and then Captain Bobston inquired.

"Can't we kindle a fire here? It's as dark as wolves' mouths, and the rocks are chilly too."

"I think there's some pieces of wood in one corner, if they have not been disturbed since I was here last. Pharaoh, where are you?"

"He's lyer," replied Pete spitefully; "he's been squatted on a lot ob sticks eber sin' he come in, an' won't let me come nigh him."

Pharaoh, who either pretended or was in reality asleep, being rolled around for several minutes consented to awake. A flint and tinder was produced, and with a good deal of

trouble, a tiny fire was started, which served only to make the gloom visible. By its dim light, it was discovered that the interior of the cavern was about a dozen feet in width, and somewhat more in length. At the further extremity stood the horse, snorting and alarmed as the blaze grew brighter and brighter. Near by him were Pharaoh and Pete, their eyes and teeth alone visible.

The disconsolate Miss Jellaby sat dejected and silent beside her meek and patient sister, merely turning her eyes without moving her head, as Captain Bobston and Winslow carefully collected the fragments of wood, and attended to the fire. So small a quantity of the latter was found, that hardly a flame could be kept going through the night. The blankets and extra clothing brought along were so disposed that the females were rendered as comfortable as the circumstances would admit, while the male portion agreed to keep watch of the entrance until morning.

"Upon second thought," said Winslow, "I believe it would be more prudent to let the fire die out."

"And why so?"

"Because the mouth of the cave is entirely open, and we cannot conjecture who may see it from the outside."

"Let it go out then by all means."

A few minutes later, the same inky darkness filled the cave. A sense of danger, and of the necessity of mutual assistance, will generate a feeling of companionship among the coldest of friends. Captain Bobston sidled up to Winslow, and the two conversed long and pleasantly.

"What do you think of venturing out when the wind subsides?" asked the former.

"It will not do," replied the hunter. "The darkness is so great that none of us could tell in which direction we were going, and the trees are so loaded with rain, that we should be drenched to the skin before we had gone a hundred yards."

"But we are losing valuable time. We have not made much progress toward the settlement."

"True, but it cannot be helped."

"You know there is a brook we must cross."

"Good heavens! I had forgotten that!" exclaimed Winslow. "That brook is a raging torrent, into which it would be certain death to venture. We must wait until that subsides before we reach our friends."

This contingency had not occurred to one of the party. While all were aware of the existence of the brook in question, they never dreamed it would prove any obstacle to their progress. Even now as they listened, its sullen roar could be heard above the the soothng wind and the distant rumbling of thunder.

"Its fury cannot last long," said Captain Bobston. "The storm has come up and gone down so suddenly, the extra amount of water will soon be gone."

"The brook will have decreased a great deal by night-fall, but enough will remain, I am almost certain, to keep us upon this side until morning. I have often hunted in these woods, and know how it acts."

"There is no danger of my forming any particular friendship for it."

At this juncture, Miss Jellaby moved uneasily in her sleep, and was to heard to mutter.

"I always knew it would be so!" and Pete gave Pharaoh a kick that made him whine with pain.

But a few minutes later, none were awake except Captain Bobston and Winslow. They were too chilled and nervous to become unconscious, and they remained conversing in a low tone for some fifteen or twenty minutes, when the latter suddenly uttered a suppressed "sh!" Listening intently, they heard the footsteps of some animal coming into the cavern. The sounds showed that there were either two persons, or that it was a quadruped.

All doubts were soon put at rest by a guttural ejaculation from one, as he bumped down upon the stony earth. Two Indians had entered the cave.

The carelessness of their movements, and the exclamation of the one in question, proved they were unaware of the presence of the fugitives. Being caught in the storm,

they had probably made all haste thither, and entered for the purpose of obtaining rest, and perhaps sleep.

The situation of our friends, to say the least, was unpleasant, even if it was not dangerous. Should the savages remain until morning, a collision with them was inevitable, while the movements of the sleepers, the neighing of the horse, or the scent of the fire—which was still lingering in the cave—must awaken suspicion, and lead to an investigation upon their part.

The savages conversed awhile in their own tongue, the meaning of which could only be conjectured by the hearers. The latter were in a wretched state of mind—expecting every minute an exclamation from Miss Jellaby or the negroes, or a whinney from the horse. By and by, the Indians became quiet, stretched themselves out, manifestly with the intention of securing a few hours in slumber.

But this could not be permitted, and Winslow determined to prevent it. Placing his hand upon the arm of Captain Bobston, to prepare him for what he was about to do, he gave utterance to a low, threatening growl. A movement upon the part of the intruders showed that alarm was excited, and that their disposition to sleep had departed. Without losing time, Winslow growled more fiercely than before, making a movement of his hand and feet at the same time, as if he were approaching his prey.

This decided the matter. The thoroughly affrighted Indians scrambled pell mell out of the cave, and disappeared in a twinkling.

"A good riddance," said Captain Bobston, enthusiastically.

"If they do not return too soon."

"The deuce! there is no danger of that?"

"Not before daylight, I trust. Few persons wish to attack a foe in the dark, and they will not pay us a visit as long as the night lasts."

"We must then leave upon the first appearance of light."

"Of course, although we can make little forward progress till the creek subsides."

The night passed away without further incident, except that Pharaoh and Pete got into a fight during their sleep, and Miss Jellaby was evidently haunted with terrible dreams, from her continual mutterings and repinings.

Finally daylight dawned, and Winslow passed to the mouth of the cave to take such a view as his situation afforded. The trees were heavy with rain, which came rattling down like so many bullets at every breath of air, while the loud, continuous roar of the swollen creek had increased to such power, that the young hunter well knew that no passage could be effected during that day.

Upon the gravelly dirt, a few feet from where he stood, he detected prints of the moccasins of the Indians who had left in such a hurry a few hours before. It was hardly probable they were in the vicinity, although they might return at a later hour in the day, with perhaps others, to dislodge the animal that had deprived them so unceremoniously of their night's rest.

Re-entering the cave, the young hunter found that all his friends were awake and astir. Preparations were instantly made for departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PERILOUS FEAT.

A hearty meal was first eaten by all of the fugitives, when just as the rays of the morning sun pierced the forest, they emerged from the cave, and struck into the forest.

The hunter had faint hopes that a crossing-place in the torrent might be found a mile or so up its bank. Several years previous, while on a hunting expedition with a comrade, he had safely crossed, just after a storm as violent as this had swelled its volume to the most formidable dimensions.

"The banks are so narrow," said he, "that I first leaped across, with some assistance, and then with the help of my friend, improvised a bridge which carried him safely over. The place in question might properly be called a canon, being a narrow passage between the solid rocks. I suppose one of us might make the leap and than assist the rest over."

"Gosh! how 'bout de hoss?" inquired Pharaoh.

"He can swim."

"I's great on de jump, and I proposes a plan."

"Well, let's hear it," said Captain Bobston, hoping the negro might have hit upon some scheme that threatened less danger than the one mentioned by Winslow.

"Let me jump ober wid one ob you on my back each time, 'cept Pete hyer, and his shoes am big 'nuff for him to walk ober on dem."

"My feet aint bigger dan yourn," replied the negro in question.

"In course dey aint," retorted Pharaoh, indignantly, sliding one of his shoes forward for observation. "I glory in dem machines. I'd like to see de niggar what got dar ekal. He or me has got to be licked."

"Could not the horse be made to carry us across?" inquired Captain Bobston.

Winslow shook his head.

"The current is too swift; he would be exhausted in making the passage once or twice. The only safe plan is the one proposed; and that by no means is entirely so."

"Why not wait, William, until the stream returns to its channel?" inquired Mrs. Heywood, in her quiet, mild voice.

"The only objection to that is the delay it necessarily imposes upon us. The wishes of the party should be consulted in regard to that."

"I's in favor ob immediate, unconditional advancement," said Pharaoh, energetically, "widout any more ob dis tarrying."

"Keep quiet until your opinion is asked," commanded Captain Bobston.

"As William is the only one who really understands our situation," said Lucy, "I cannot see the necessity of consulting us in the matter at all. Let us not embarrass him with our tears and apprehensions."

"It hardly looks reasonable that one head should contain more than all the rest combined," remarked Captain Bobston, evidently nettled by what Lucy had said. "For my part, I think it is but showing decent respect to the others in asking their advice upon such a question as this."

"If it be possible to cross the stream as I did several years ago, I will do it myself," said Winslow. "We shall soon ascertain whether the thing can be done or not."

The assurance of the young hunter seemed greatly to relieve Captain Bobston, who had no desire to attempt the perilous feat himself. The fugitives now pressed rapidly forward, and a few minutes later stood upon the banks of the stream in question.

Swelled to ten times its volume, and compressed between two walls of massive rock, it raged with irresistible impetuosity. The water was of a dirty, yellow color, and its foamy spray was dashed high in the air, with a roar that drowned the voices of those standing upon the bank. When speaking, they were compelled to shout, and to explain the meaning of their words by the most vigorous gesticulation.

A few feet back from the opposite side of the stream grew a large tree, whose branches inclined so far across, that a moderate leap only enabled one to catch and swing himself over by them. Skill more than strength was required to accomplish the feat. After seizing the limb, it being necessary to swing backward and forward several times, like a pendulum, before sufficient momentum could be gathered to be carried across. It took a person of more than ordinary nerve, thus to dangle over the seething cauldron, with the consciousness that the snapping of a branch, the slipping of his hands, or his inability to increase the ball-like motion of his body, would precipitate him into a

speedy and inevitable death. Yet young Winslow had done it, and he did not hesitate to attempt it again.

Removing all superfluous clothing from his person, and leaving his rifle and accoutrements behind, he first measured the distance with his eye, and then walked backward several steps, ran with all his might to the edge of the torrent, and made a spring upward. He caught the limb with both hands, and no pen can depict the horror of his breathless companions as they saw just at the insertion of the limb, a gleaming white rent, which showed that the sudden strain had been too much for it! Whether Winslow was aware of this, of course it was impossible to tell, but if he knew of his imminent peril, he did not lose his presence of mind.

Drawing his feet up so as to sweep clear of the foaming current, he continued swinging backward and forward, up and down, while the limb sank lower and lower, and the white spot yawned wider and wider. Then seemingly conscious that the critical moment had arrived, he swayed resolutely forward with greater force than before, and struck his feet upon the opposite side with an energetic clamp, as if he would fasten them there.

But his momentum was not quite sufficient to carry his entire body over, and his trembling friends were transfixed with terror, as they saw him hanging apparently by his feet, his hat actually submerged an inch or two in the seething torrent! But holding on stoutly he commenced drawing his body upward, inch by inch, keeping his feet firmly fixed in their place until, when his body had attained a horizontal position, he managed to draw himself somewhat near the shore.

While engaged thus, the supporting limb, at its insertion, slipped rapidly along the trunk, and suddenly dropped loose into the current, burying the daring hunter from sight! As an involuntary wail of horror went up from the despairing fugitives, they saw the leaves of the limb still agitated, and the next moment, he emerged to view, apparently from the very current itself. Looking

back to his friends, he smilingly beckoned for them to follow him.

It is hardly necessary to say that none attempted the the feat.

Casting the limb loose into the current, Winslow signalled for them to remain in their places, and then searched about him for the means of bringing them over, also. They stood silent spectators, their hearts throbbing wildly at the miraculous escape they had just witnessed, and every breast glowed with admiration as the gallant fellow walked away with his usual careless step, and disappeared in the thick wood beyond.

He had been absent some five minutes, when he suddenly made his appearance, his hat gone, his hair flying, and his countenance blanched with terror. Running to the very edge of the torrent he flung his arms wildly about him, and called out to them frenzied accents ! They could see his lips move, and they caught the one word " Indians !" which told plainly enough the cause of excitement.

" Into the woods, quick !" shouted Captain Bobston, setting them the example. " The Indians are on t'other side. Hang the things, where *ain't* they ? "

Pell-mell, the fugitives scrambled after each other, Pharaoh leaping upon his horse, pounding his heels into his sides, while Pete pitched headlong over Miss Jellaby, who shouted that she " always knew it would be so," as she picked herself up again, and joined her hurrying friends.

Lucy was the last one to leave the bank, resulting from the fact that she turned back to pick up Winslow's rifle and accoutrements. While thus employed, she heard a faint shout, and looking across the torrent saw him wave her an adieu, as he turned and ran rapidly down stream. She returned the signal, and discerned distinctly the tufted heads of several Indians, flitting rapidly through the trees. Understanding that her own safety was threatened, she followed her friends, whom she overtook after running several yards.

They had just noticed her absence, and with looks of consternation were debating what means were to be taken

to recover her, when she came up and set all apprehensions regarding herself at rest.

"But William! what will become of him?" asked her mother, looking from face to face in her anguish.

"I think the more proper question is, what will become of us?" said Captain Bobston.

"Oh! they can never cross over to us."

"Don't flatter yourself into that belief. The disgusting heathens will be on this side in ten minutes after they made up their mind to do so."

"Gosh all ebertying!" called out Pharaoh, "let's get on de hoss and put. Dar's room 'nuff, but Miss Jellaby and Pete will have to sit on de hoss's neck."

"Where will we go, you black rascal?"

"Gosh! didn't tink ob dat."

"Can we not return to the bank of the stream and prevent the Indians from crossing?" asked Lucy.

"How?"

"By shooting every one who appears," she returned, her eyes flashing fire.

Captain Bobston's nose was turned up, and his mouth twisted into a scornful smile as he replied:

"A nice plan, Miss Lucy, and easily carried out. How nicely we should pick them off if they were clever enough to come up and be shot, without running any risk of being harmed ourselves."

"Who thinks we should run no risk?" she indignantly demanded. "Can we hope to accomplish anything without danger at such a time as this?"

"Do keep quiet, child," called out Miss Jellaby. "I'd like to know what you can think is the proper course for us to take? Captain Bobston is the only director we now have. Dear, dear, dear, why did we ever come to this heathenish country!"

"Why, William has no rifle!" exclaimed Mrs. Heywood, noticing for the first time that Lucy held it in her hand. "What will he do, with no means of defence?"

"It was his own fault," said Miss Jellaby. "Why didn't he take his gun with him? He's so venturesome.

He will make such a husband as the poor dead colonel, Lucy, if you should marry him!"

"Me marry him!" repeated the girl, in astonishment. "Why, what are you talking about, aunty, and at such a time as this?"

"Ha, ha, ha! sadly out of the way, isn't she?" laughed the Captain.

"Yes, and so is any one else in supposing that there is one here that I should wish as a husband."

"I declare!" exclaimed the captain, a spasmodic sense of his duty flashing upon him. "We are squandering our time when every moment is precious. Pharaoh, you run back to the creek and see whether any of the Indians have crossed."

"O, gosh! I'd rather be 'scused."

"If he's afraid, you do it, Pete."

"Gorry! I'd rather be 'scused, too."

"Mrs. Heywood, I believe I am the director of this party, as the matter now stands. If that negro there intends to disobey me in every command that I give, what ability do I possess to accomplish anything?"

"I am sure my power to compel them to obey is less than yours. Perhaps the best method of inducing them to face danger would be by setting them the example occasionally."

The quiet, dignified reply of Mrs Heywood cut the captain, who was so ungenerous as to seek to cast some of the responsibility upon her shoulders, when she had no means of meeting it. There is no means of telling to what point matters might have arrived, had not Pharaoh, at this moment, raised the startling cry of "Indians!" Ere the alarmed fugitives could tell the direction of the approaching danger, a crackling of the undergrowth was heard, and they caught sight of a single figure hurrying toward them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OLD HUT.

After his perilous passage of the torrent, Winslow descended the bank, in quest of some large limb or sapling with which to span the stream. He was scrutinizing the trees about him, never once dreaming of danger, when he saw an Indian whisk behind a large oak, hardly a hundred yards distant, while two others commenced approaching him. Possessing no means of defence, he turned and ran to the torrent, when he warned his friends, as we have already related. The Indians, seeing that he was unarmed, left the cover and boldly advanced toward the hunter, who was cou sing like a wild deer down the bank of the stream. It was his intention, if too hotly pressed, to spring into the water and trust to that, rather than fall into the hands of his deadly foes.

Below the point where the stream had been crossed, it rapidly widened and became more shallow, although the current abated nothing in its terrific velocity, which sometimes swept trees, stumps, and in many cases rolled huge boulders before it. Winslow had run but a short time, when he found his retreat suddenly cut off, one Indian being above, another below, and the remaining one about opposite, while all three were rapidly centering toward him. Understanding how matters stood, he hesitated no longer but made a leap out into the boiling, seething waters.

A brave deed always commands the admiration of an enemy, even though he be savage. And the three Indians paused, and watched the struggling hunter without one raising their rifles, when they could have easily shot him in the water. They saw him " beat the waves beneath him and ride upon their backs," and buffet the surging current as it bore him irresistibly onward. Now beneath the sur-

face—now he emerges—again he disappears—yonder rises his head far down the stream—now spinning as if in the mouth of the maelstrom—now whirled among the dancing trees and driftwood, he still struggles bravely forward—when, look! he throws up his arms and goes down!

What is that black spot away down the current, and near the other shore? It resembles some blackened piece of wood, but the water is dashed around it, as if it were combatting the hungry element. Further downward, and still nearer to the other shore it is seen, till at length it stops as though it had lodged against the opposite bank.

Motionless a minute, the hunter slowly rises from the water, as though he moved with great pain, and crawled up the opposite bank. The Indians recognize their enemy, but they are too magnanimous to fire after seeing him perform such a deed; and, resting a moment, Winslow rises to his feet and makes his way through the wood in search of his friends.

Little difficulty was experienced in finding them, but he came near being shot before he was fairly seen. Pharaoh yelled "Indians!" at the top of his voice, and Captain Bobston's rifle was already at his shoulder when Lucy called out his name.

The joy of the fugitives was unbounded at finding their friend restored to them. The tears came to Mrs. Heywood's eyes, as she greeted him. Miss Jellaby, for a moment, was fairly hysterical in her demonstrations. The two negroes cracked their heels together and shouted until they were ordered to stop.

"Gosh all eberyting?" exclaimed Pharaoh, "how did you get so wet? Orter took took off yer clofes when you jumped in de water."

"How'd he get 'em agin if he had?" asked Pete.

"What'd you know 'bout it, ole wool-head? Couldn't he gone back and got 'em agin arter he'd swam ober?"

"Yas, but how could he get 'em aross arter all?"

"De ignorance of dat nigger am amazin!" said Pharaoh despairingly. "Don't you see he could 've fust swum

across widout his clofes, and den he could 've been safe on dis side, wid his garments dry."

"On t'other side—yes. What den?"

"Den he could 've gone back, picked up his clofes, laid 'em down agin, swam out, den paddled back, den fotched 'em part way ober, den dove down and gone to toder bank, and in dat way fotched 'em ober safe and dry?" he asked triumphantly. "Ef you can't get dat simple explanation frough yer wool, dar's no use ob undertakin' for to make anyting plain to you."

"I understands, but, arter all, I don't tink dem clofes would be berry dry by de time he landed on dis side."

"Dat's cause you don't know nuffin."

"I am so glad you have been saved!" said Lucy Heywood, with beaming eyes, as she placed her hands in those of William Winslow, and looked up in his face.

"And I count my dangers and sufferings as nothing when I hear such words as these."

"You are welcome to them. How brave you are!"

The fervent, honest tones with which this was uttered brought the blush to the gallant hunter's face, and sent a thrill of pleasure through him, while Captain Bobston's uneasiness became excessive.

"I always knew you would be saved," said Miss Jellaby. "You are so much like poor Colonel Heywood that is dead and gone. He was very headstrong. If he attempted anything he was sure to carry it through. I remember one time when he was visiting sister Mary here, that is, before they were married. A great storm came up, and we did all we could to urge him to stay over night, but it was of no use, though he had six good miles to go before he could reach home. He went in spite of our united entreaties!"

"And did he reach home safely?" asked Winslow, affecting an interest in the narration.

"Oh, yes! he got home; that's it, you see. I just mentioned it to show how very headstrong he was—the poor dead man!"

"Mr. Winslow," said Captain Bobston, "a plan was pro-

posed during your absence, which I now submit to your consideration. These Indians are aware that we are upon this side. As they will use every means to get over to us, it is proposed that we do all we can to prevent them."

The hunter shook his head.

"If we could prevent them, it would be only a loss of time. The torrent has already commenced to subside, and a thousand will soon be able to cross without any difficulty. Let us go further up the stream—Heaven! why didn't I think of that before?" he exclaimed, his countenance lighting up with joy.

"Think of what?" asked Captain Bobston.

"Why, of the Old Hut. It isn't a mile distant."

The Old Hut was a strong cabin, which had been erected in this section of country years before Colonel Heywood or any other settler had made his appearance. It was supposed to have been built and occupied by a party of hunters who were exploring the region, and they had evidently been besieged within it, as the logs bore the marks of many bullets, and showed evidence of violent usage. It had been partly torn down, but it stood still strong and secure, and with an hours' work Winslow believed could be rendered impregnable against a large force of savages. Hence his exultation when he recollects they were within such a short distance of it.

"Suppose we are besieged there," said Mrs. Heywood. "We have neither provisions nor water, and we can soon be starved into submission."

"My intention is to remain there only until to-night. We are in jeopardy, and at the mercy of our foes every moment that we are in the woods, while within that we shall be secure, at least for the present. Let us not delay any longer."

The party were in motion the next instant, the hunter, as usual, taking the lead. As he journeyed silently forward, he recollects the many stories he had heard regarding the Old Hut, some of which were that it was known sometimes to be occupied by the Indians as well as

white men, and he by no means felt free from all apprehension in leading his friends to it.

In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes they came in sight of the structure. It stood in the widest of a small clearing, and was nothing but simply a plain square cabin, with several logs loose, and with its roof considerably dilapidated. Winslow halted, while Captain Bobston seemed disposed to press forward.

"Wait a minute," said the former, in a low tone. "Don't be too hasty."

"Why, what the deuce is up, eh?"

"It isn't safe to enter that building until we understand a little more about it."

"What do you mean, eh? Explain yourself."

"What assurance have we that there is no person in there?"

"Hang it! I never once thought of that. You don't mean to say there are Indians in there?"

"I haven't said so, nor would I be willing to say there are not."

"Well, I should like to find a place where the disgusting imps aint—that's all."

"Gosh all ebryting!" exclaimed Pharaoh. "I seed sunth'in' move den, r ght on de corner ob de roof."

Small as was the faith the negro's words generally inspired, they were not without their weight upon the present occasion. The possibility, not to say probability, of their foes lying in wait in the very building they were about to use as a refuge, was enough to place the fugitives in a wretched state of apprehension and terror.

Perhaps the Indians had used every means to induce the whites to do what they contemplated. Fairly within the trap, every one could be easily captured, without risk upon their own part. While an open encounter in the woods would be certain to be followed with success for the savages, yet it was not likely to be gained without the loss of some of their number.

On the other hand, if no such desire was entertained by their enemies, they were frittering away valuable time in

debating the matter. Winslow did not wait long to determine upon the course for him to pursue.

"The building must be reconnoitered by one of us before the rest venture to approach. Captain Bobston, may I ask you to do it?"

The individual in question could make no refusal, and yet he was exceedingly loth to undertake the task proposed.

"I am willing, of course, but really I can't see the necessity—upon my honor, I can't."

"You must be more than ordinarily blind, sir."

"Then why not do it yourself?"

"Thus far, Captain Bobston, since I have joined this party, all such duties, I believe, have been performed by myself. I do not see the necessity of this; if you are to accompany us, we have a right to expect a willingness upon your part to put your shoulder to the wheel."

"It is our wish," said Mrs Heywood, "that no more time be lost in idle discussion. It is plainly your duty to do what has been requested of you, and if you refuse"—

"We shall believe you lack the necessary courage," said Lucy, excitedly.

"Hush, child! I did not mean that. If you refuse, I shall think that all the protestations of friendship and interest you have made were intended to deceive us."

"For land's sake, avoid being *headstrong*, Captain Bobston," interposed Miss Jellaby. "I have seen so much of that in the poor colonel that is dead and gone, that I must warn you against it. Do go, without delay. I recollect a circumstance somewhat similar to this. The poor colonel was"—

"Hang it! what are you all urging me as though I wasn't willing to do my duty? I have only hesitated in order to decide the proper manner in which to approach the concern."

"I would advise you to go a little to the left. You will then advance toward the end of the house, and be less likely to attract the attention of any one who may be inside."

"I advise you to take de hoss and push him afore yer and den if dey does see yer, dey won't be able to see yer," said Pharaoh, with great earnestness.

"How'd he got back?" asked Pete.

"You keep your mouf shut, ole wool-head. Yer always makin' obserwations when nobody wants to hear 'em. How'd he come back, eh? Why, let de hoss shove him back, dat's how? Shut up, you needn't speak, 'cause we doesn't want to hear yer."

There being no excuse for further delay, Captain Bobston bade his friends an affectionate farewell, giving to Lucy Heywood a reproving look as he took her hand and held it a moment.

"If I fall, avenge my death!" said he, impressively.

"Fudge! you needn't fall!" replied Winslow.

Leaving the others within the wood, the captain moved as he had been advised to do, and commenced a stealthy, silent and cautious approach to the old hut.

CHAPTER X.

THE RECONNOISANCE OF THE OLD HUT.

As Captain Bobston approached the old hut, his progress became proportionately slower and more cautious. When within some thirty or forty yards of the building he was seen to enter a mass of undergrowth, where he became invisible. Some ten or fifteen minutes passing, and he failing to appear, his friends began to wonder and speculate upon the cause of his delay.

"It can't be he has come out upon the opposite side," remarked Winslow; "we should see him the moment he appeared."

"He may have discovered something about the building, and is watching it," added Miss Heywood, "although I feel certain that the cabin is empty."

"I do not, by any means. The deviltry of these wild Indians is marvellous!"

"Guess he got asleep and is tookin' a nap," said Pharaoh. "Shan't I tiaw a boother in dem bushes to wake him up?"

"Mind your own business, and we'll attend to such matters."

"Look!" exclaimed Lucy. "See how the bushes are agitated! What does it mean! There is something unusual occurring in them."

The attention of all now became riveted upon the undergrowth, which Captain Bobston had been seen to enter. It was swaying to and fro, hither and thither, as though some objects were making frantic struggles beneath it.

"I fear he has encountered an enemy," said Winslow, considerably excited, and manifesting a disposition to go to his assistance.

"Why does he not shout or make a noise?" asked Lucy.

"Maybe he is beyond making any noise," replied Miss Jellaby, with evident symptoms of hysterics.

The young hunter was on the point of advancing to the assistance of his friend, when he caught sight of his feet, and saw the next instant, that he was vigorously backing out of the undergrowth. A moment more his whole body was visible, and rising to his feet he turned, and came at the top of his speed toward the fugitives.

"What's the matter? what is the matter? Are you killed?" asked Miss Jellaby, as he came up.

"I'll be hanged if I ain't purty nigh it. I have had the greatest fight I ever had in my life, not excepting any of the numerous affrays in which I have been under Mad Anthony."

"Did you kill him?"

"Kill him? No; he's there yet, if he hasn't crawled away."

"You wounded him, then?"

"Wounded him? No, I'll be hanged if I did."

"Why didn't he run then?"

"Run? What are you talking about? What do you suppose I had a fight with?"

"An Indian, to be sure."

"No, sir; an enormous rattlesnake, sir. And a desperate fight it was. He lapped his tail around my neck, and made the most determined efforts to bite me, but I held his head away, and after the most exhausting struggles, frightened him off. A terrible fight it was indeed sir."

Captain Bobston did not seem greatly frightened, and Winslow doubted very much the story he had just told. He appeared unwilling or afraid to meet his gaze, and kept up with such volubility, that almost any one would have suspected the truth of what he said. It looked very much, to most of the party, as though he had employed this ruse to avoid a near approach to the old hut.

"You can still reach the building, captain," said Winslow, "and avoid those bushes which contained such a frightful foe."

"Good Heavens! I hope you don't ask me to make the venture again, after passing through such a dreadful scene! Beside, sir, the terrible strain upon my system has affected that wound of mine. It was all I could do to force my way back."

"If you refuse, of course, it is idle to talk further about it. Our safety demands that we should enter the hut without much delay, and not one of us must step within until we have ascertained whether our foes are already there. I will do it myself."

"Oh, Massa Winslow, won't you let this child do it?" pleaded Pharaoh.

"You? I am surprised at your making the request. What put such an idea in your head?"

"I's mortal def on snakes, and I wants a tussle wid dat big feller what sent Captain Bobston back."

"Will you pass through that line of undergrowth?"

"Yes, sah; and if dat rattler disputes my passage I reckon dar'll be a row."

"Well, you can go. Make all haste, and examine the building thoroughly from the outside."

The delighted negro was on the point of starting, when Captain Bobston interposed.

"See here, I hardly think it probable that you'll find that snake there. I gave him such a thrashing that it's most likely he's gone."

"I don't think you'll see anything of a snake either."

The meaning tones in which Winslow uttered this brought a smile to every face except that of Captain Bobston, whose brow became as threatening as a thundercloud. He did not say anything, however, for the reason that he had no excuse for doing so.

Leaving his gun behind, Pharaoh scrambled toward the hut, taking precisely the same direction pursued by the captain. He did not seem affected by fear in the least, but made his way steadily forward, and plunged into the bushes much in the same manner that he would have done into a stream of water.

The fugitives now watched the undergrowth with great interest. The progress of the negro through them could be traced out by a line of bending, swaying bushes.

"He does not halt in the least," remarked Winslow, "but presses right forward."

"The snake is gone, I suppose," said the captain.

"I do not doubt it. Ha! yonder rises his black head upon the other side. There he goes!"

The negro was in plain view again, moving forward cautiously and stealthily, his body in a crouching position and flitting from side to side, as if he scented danger in the air. He never once halted until he reached the end of the hut, when he turned and made some signal to his friends.

The anxiety of the latter became intense. Pharaoh whisked around the corner of the building, and the time seemed interminable that he was hid from view. At length his ebony visage made its appearance on the same side of the hut in which was the entrance. He stepped softly toward this, and his friends saw him peer within.

Holding his head thus a moment, he drew it back, and

made some signal to his companions, and then entered the structure.

Every heart throbbed with the wildest apprehension. A perfect silence reigned, and all eyes were fixed upon the old hut. Minute after minute passed, and still the silence was unbroken. It seemed as if Pharaoh would never appear again, and all sorts of conjectures filled the minds of the fugitives.

While thus listening, every nerve strung to its highest point, a dull thump was heard within the hut, as if a log had fallen to the floor, and the next moment a yell of mortal terror came from the lungs of the negro, as he dashed to view with some person in furious pursuit of him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCOUT.

"The Indians are in the hut! There they come! I always knew it would be so!" screamed Miss Jellaby, wringing her hands in dire terror.

"William, William, let us flee!" said Mrs. Heywood, more excited than she had been for years.

The negro, Pete, at the first yell of his companion, had vaulted upon the horse and dashed off into the woods. Lucy Heywood caught up the gun left by the negro, although hardly aware of what she was doing; while Captain Bobston was "tearing around." Winslow was the only self-possessed person among them. The minute Pharaoh came to view, he cocked his rifle, brought it to his shoulder, and held it ready to shoot his pursuer the instant he could do so without danger to the negro. Holding it thus, so that the body of the latter was covered, his finger was already pressing the trigger, when he suddenly lowered it with an exclamation of astonishment.

"In the name of the seven wonders who is that chasing Pharaoh?" he asked. "It is not an Indian!"

In the meantime the negro, yelling like a demon, was

tearing through the bush as if pursued by Satan himself. Behind him came a singular, bareheaded personage, who could not be said to run, as at every step he made a spring high in the air, for the purpose of bestowing a tremendous kick upon the being that had excited his wrath. Thump, thump, they could be plainly heard by the fugitives, in spite of the ear-splitting screeches of Pharaoh, who strove in vain to get beyond reach of the foot that nearly lifted him off the ground at each concussion.

On he came, his pursuer jumping and kicking in his rear, until panting and screeching, the negro dashed up to Winslow.

"Begorra, it's meself that'll tache ye how to spile a gentleman's shlape," said his persecutor, ceasing his demonstrations. "Ye ould black spalpeen, to come pokin' in me palace in that sthyle."

"Gosh all eber'ting! I didn't know you was in dar."

The new comer was an Irishman, as the reader has already gathered from his accent. Beside being bareheaded he had no arms about him, except a hunting-knife in the girdle that encircled his waist. He was a well-formed individual, dressed in the usual hunter's dress, with a "round, jovial face, betokening native wit and good humor," and despite his manifestations of wrath just given, there was nothing about him to indicate that it was either genuine or lasting. He paused, with a comical look of perplexity as he saw the whites around, and with a graceful obeisance to the ladies, said:

"Pat Mul-ooney, at your service. I'm slightly surprised to meet you, as the souldier said, when the cannon ball cracked him side the head."

"We are both surprised and gratified," replied Winslow. "The sight of a white man assures us that we have found a friend."

"Begorrah, but ye spakes the truth there jist. We are all friends in this haythen counthry, barrin' the haythens themselves. What might ye bees doin' in these same parts! A pleasure party, thrampin' through the woods, cullin' the swate flowers ye finds!"

"No, we are a party on our way to the settlement to escape the Indians. The great height of the stream has prevented our crossing it at present. For the purpose of insuring greater safety we concluded to enter the Old Hut. We sent Pharaoh forward to reconnoitre."

"And he did the same, gettin' purty well racynoitred himself as the heretic said when he was stretched on the rack."

"We concluded he must have provoked you in some manner."

"That he did jist. I was shlapin' quietly on an ole boord, when he comes and rowls me off on the floor."

"Golly! I frowed you down to wake you up," said Pharaoh, who had recovered from his fright by this time.

"And to return the compliment I give yer a lift, jist."

"I presume ye have no objection to inform us why it is you are in this particular section at this time?" said the hunter.

"Not at all, not at all; but let ne ax in the fust place is there one of the haythen villages somewhere in these parts?"

"Yes, there is one some five or six miles to the west of us."

"That's the spot for which I've histed sail jist now."

"On some errand I suppose?"

"You're right there. Ould Mad Anthony (God bless him!) has sent me to saa how the haythen are thrivin', and I'm goin' down that way slowly and magistically."

"Ah, you are one of the general's scouts; I understand. We have a captain of the general's here with us—Mr. Bobston there."

"Wurrah, wurrah, now, do ye sthyle him a captain?" asked the Irishman, surveying the individual from head to foot with one of his curiously comical expressions. "Be the same token, ef a captin, what is he doin' off here in the woods?"

"He was wounded and is on a furlough. He goes with us to the settlement, where he intends to join General Wayne."

"He's excuseable considerin' the leddies here that he has charge of, but the ginal needs all his boys as soon as he can get 'em."

"As the Hut contains no person we may as well hold our conversation within it," said Winslow, moving in that direction.

"You're right there. There's none there but myself, which ain't there at all, jist, at present. I'll lead the way, if I can use me fut after the exercise I've just give it."

The loquacious Irishman took the advance, the rest following eagerly.

"Where's Pete?" asked Pharaoh, looking in vain for him.

"The cowardly dog has run off upon the back of the horse."

"Gosh! if I doesn't kick him more'n I've been-kicked when he comes back for dat trick."

"You have probably learned a considerable of the different uses to which the foot may be applied?"

"Yes, sah! dar's a science 'bout it dat I've jist learned to perfection. I wants some one to practice on, and Pete'll do fust rate."

"You must excuse my appearance, leddies," said Pat Mulrooney. "I hadn't time to compleate my toilet when that spalpeen disturbed me. I own a hat and a gun, too, that lies within the hut there."

"You seem carele-s in venturing to take a nap without securing the door against all intruders."

"Begorrah, but I was care ess that time, I owns, but it's Pat Mulrooney's nature."

CHAPTER XII.

WITHIN THE HUT.

"You must all fael perfectly fra and aisy, as if you were at an Irish wake," said Pat Mulrooney, as he ushered his

friends into the o'd hut. "What a booteful palace jist this would make in the owld counthry. Right where we stand would be the parlor and kitchin, and jist there the pig sty, and while shlaping above we could hear his swate grunt through the night."

"Now, do tell," said Miss Jellaby. "I have heard that the Irish let their pigs live with them, but I never believed it until you said so this minute. Well, well, I'm glad I don't live in Ireland."

"Be the same token so's meself. They'd make a praist of you."

"For what?"

"The booteful wag ye have to that tongue of yours. There's no praist in the counthry that could hold his own a minute wid ye."

Miss Jellaby was in considerable doubt whether to take this as a compliment or a s'ur. The inscrutable expression of the Irishman's face afforded no clue to his meaning, and she therefore held her silence.

In the meantime, Winslow had secured the door as it would allow. He found it a strong oaken structure of massive rough-hewn planks, which, when fastened to its place was as impregnable as the most solid portion of the building. Still, strong and seure as the structure appeared from the inside, his practised eye told him at a glance, that it was not as strong as it appeared—that in military parlance it was not "tenable."

"I tell you what it is," said he to Captain Bobston, who had followed, and now stood beside him, "that looks bad!"

"It does at present, but can't it be made to look better?"

"We may make it *look* so, but that will be all. Note the rottenness of these logs, and how frail they are in their paces. Suppose a horde of the demons come down on the roof. They can demolish it in ten minutes."

"If we make it *appear* firm, we may make them think so, and deter them from the attempt."

"Ah! captain, you ought to know how difficult it is to

deceive one of the Indians. They have the eyes of eagles, and know too well the conditions of the hut."

"There is one thing, however, that pleases me," pursued Winslow. "The logs, although rotten and decayed, are also thoroughly soaked and dampened from this last driving storm."

"Hang it, how does that suit you? It strikes me that it is infernally uncomfortable. See how the rain has poured in, so that it is as wet and gloomy within as without."

"There is no means of warfare which the Indians never fail to use when it is possible, and that means is *fire*. How would you like to have these logs crackling and blazing about you, and roasting you by inches?"

"Can't say that I would fancy it much."

"Well, sir, if these logs would only burn, it wou'd not be long before you were enclosed in a wall of fire, with the choice of a death by that element or the tomahawk of your enemies."

"Oh! hang the merciless devils!" exclaimed Captain Bobston. "Won't they ever tire of their deeds of blood? What are so many doing out in this section? I should think they would all be needed to oppose Mad Anthony."

"There are always enough of them for such work as this."

"But, see here, can't we fix up this room somewhat? If it can't be made invulnerable, it can be made stronger at least."

"Yes; and we will do it instantly."

The two set to work, and in the course of fifteen minutes had strengthened the roof as much as the means at their command allowed, after which the two descended, and joined their friends.

"As this is to be our refuge for the present," said Winslow, "we must neglect no precaution that can render our situation more secure. I have noticed that the upper portion of the building is pierced with loop-holes"—

"So did I jist," interrupted the Irishman, "and some of the same loop-holes happens to be in the roof, and luks as

if they was made to fire cannon through at the blrds in the traas."

"We have closed those so far as we were ab'e. Some one must now remain above to keep a watch of the woods while we strengthen the lower story, for here, most probably, the full force of the contest will be felt."

"What contest?" inquired Miss Jellaby, with a woebegone expression.

"That which we are likely to have with the Indians."

"They are coming, then?"

"I do not know, very likely they will. At any rate it is best to be prepared for them."

"I always knew it would be so. It seems we are to be tormented for ever by the cruel savages. Why did Colonel Heywood?"—

"I am just the person to act as sentinel above," said Lucy. "I shall only be in the way here, and a good pair of eyes is all that is needed. I am sure I can see as well as any of you."

"And I will go with you," added her mother. "While the men are employed here, we can be doing service there."

"I admire the prudence and foresight you have displayed all along," said Winslow, addressing himself to Mrs. Heywood. "It is not necessary for me to ward both of you against exposing yourselves for a single instant. The treacherous foe will watch and wait hour after hour for the opportunity which may be given in an unguarded moment. Let nothing escape your attention, the falling of a leaf, the rustling of a branch, anything, however slight, should awaken your suspicion. Call us instantly upon the first manifestation of danger."

CHAPTER XIII.

PETE

"Now, Mr. Winslow, ye take howld of that ind of the log, and yees that is called Captain Bobston, take howld the middle, and ye colored gentlemin, as has been raised several inches taller by raison of the vartues of me fut, do ye take tother ind."

"Gosh all ebeyting! Whar will you git a chance?" asked Pharaoh in a amazement.

"I'm superintindint jist, that oversaas and directs the wurruk, and would prefar that ye axes no more questions wid that big, grinnin' mouth of yourn."

The stick in question was duly adjusted in the proper place, when Pat gave a helping hand in completing the means of defence. These amounted to little. Such logs as lay useless were placed as props against the door and different portions of the structure, and the crevices which had been made by the weather were carefully closed, so as to keep out any stray bullets that might be fired at the inmates. The lower story, like the upper, was pierced with numerous port-ho'es, which served both for the purpose of observation and defence.

Looking around in vain, in the hopes of detecting something which might still be done, he said.

"We are prepared for our enemies so far as human work can prepare us. We have braced and strengthened the hut as much as can be done."

"There is one thing I propowses," said Pat Mulrooney, shutting one eye and scratching his head.

"Well, let us hear it then."

"We have propped up the ould house purty well inside, and, begorrah, why not brace up the outside?"

"Outside? Of what use will that be?"

"Suppose the haythen should take it into their heads to run off wid the whole concern, what's to hender?"

"A rather difficult job," laugh'd the hunter. "If that is all we have to fear, I see little cause for alarm."

"You'll think different whey ye find the hut picked up and trotted off wid the haythen, same as a snortle gallops away wid his shell. Heaven save me! what does that clicking noise mean?" he suddenly asked, springing from the door against which he had been leaning.

"I have heard it several minutes, and thought it was you," replied Captain Bobston.

"Listen!" commanded Pat, raising his hand to enjoin silence.

"It might be done by some person upon the outside," said Winslow, stooping, and placing his ear to the door. Then, in a low voice, he demanded.

"Who is there?"

"Me! won't you let me in?" came back in a whining voice.

"Gosh! it's Pete and de hoss?" exclaimed Pharaoh, with expanded eyes.

"Which is shpakin', Pate or the hoss?"

"Pete! Gosh all eberyting, let's let him in?" added the negro, his black face glowing with exultation at the anticipated recovery of his animal.

"And who is Pate?" asked the Irishman.

"A negro servant who started with us," replied Winslow. "He become frightened, and suddenly left before you joined us."

"Is he short in statoore?"

"About medium. Why do you ask?"

"I'd crave the privilege of lengthening him out several mches, by the same vartue that this grinnin' gentleman was lengthened."

"He's done nothing to merit it, and"—

"How queerly the negro talks. Just listen," interrupted Captain Bobston, frowning from amused perplexity.

"Oh, Massa Winslow, please let me in. I'll nebber run

away wid de hoss agin. Jes let me in dis time, dat's all. Please, massa, don't keep poor Pete out hyer."

Such were the entreaties of the servant, uttered in a peculiar sing song style that none of the whites had ever heard him use before.

Turning to Poaraoh, Winslow asked.

"Did you ever hear him talk in that strange manner?"

"Yes; two, free times."

"When?"

"When de didn't mean dat what he said. I heard him beg to cunnel for suthin' dat I knowed he didn't wan't, and he talked jes dat way."

"Was he always in sport when he spoke thus?"

"Allers; it's a pecooliarity ob de creatur."

William Winslow, Captain Robston, and Pat Mulrooney looked in each other's faces without speaking a word. This was a mystery that neither of them could explain.

"Just remain here while I go above a moment," said the former, as he hurried into the upper apartment.

Here he found Mrs. Heywood and her daughter at their posts of duty, watching as attentively as though unaware that the negro was standing below. The latter, standing close to the building, it was impossible to see him, although he must have been visible in approaching the hut.

"Lucy," said he, "did you see Pete when he came out of the woods?"

"Yes; is he standing outside yet? Why do you not let him in?"

"He acts so strangely I do not know what to make of it. You ought to have notified us when he made his appearance."

"It being Pete I thought it hardly necessary."

"Is he alone?"

"Of course. Y. u appear troubled about something, William, what is it?"

"I tel you, Lucy, I don't like the look o' things. Did you notice anything peculiar in the action of Pete?"

"Yes; I remember I was puzzled at his movements. I saw him standing several minutes out yonder on the edge

of the woods; he was either crying or laughing, and kept looking behind him, as if expecting some one. He stood quiet awhile before advancing, and then after coming about a rod, he turned back, and taking a step or two, turned again, and ran this way. All this time he was either laughing or crying."

"Which do you think it was?"

"Both, most likely. I did my best to determine, but could not be sure. I saw nothing of his horse, or of any person beside himself."

"Did he run all the way up to the hut?"

"No; when perhaps a hundred yards distance, he halted again, and looked behind him. Standing thus, with his back to me, for several minutes, he appeared undecided, until, finally, he approached the building at a very tardy gait."

"Do you not think it strange that he should act in this manner?"

"I do not, when we remember the circumstances under which he left us. He expects a severe reprimand for his flight, and it is that which troubles him so much."

"It may be, but I can't believe it. Now Lucy, and Mrs. Heywoo^t, let me admonish you again to let nothing escape your notice. No matter who or what it is, do not fail to inform us instantly."

With these parting instructions, the hunter descended to the lower portion of the cabin.

"Well what is decided? Shall we admit him?" asked Captain Bobston.

"Let me talk with him a moment?" replied Winslow, approaching the door. Speaking in a low voice, he called.

"Pete, Pete, do you hear me?"

"Yes, massa, let me in! Oh! don't keep me out hyer! oh"—

"I say, Pete!"

"Yes, massa, let me in; don't keep me out here! Oh, massa"—

"Confound it! can't you keep a moment while I speak?" called Winslow, impatiently. The negro ceased, and he asked, "Do you want to come in?"

"Yes, on, yes," and thereupon he commenced whining and moaning worse than before.

"He has either lost his senses or is crazy," said Winslow speaking to the others.

"P'raps a tip of the shillaleh would restore his sences. Its haaling vartues are wonderful."

"I tell you what, massa, *Pete is only pretendin'!*" said Pharaoh, emphatically.

"What in the name of common sense is he pretending for?" asked Captain Bobston. "It looks to me as though he were in earnest about it."

The hunter seemed undetermined how to act. While he did not wish to refuse the negro admittance when he believed he was really in danger, still there was a suspicion which so troubled him that he hesitated about unbarring the door. At last placing his mouth close to the door, he called the negro's name in a low tone. It was repeated several times, when the servant asked, quickly, "What do you want?" and kept up his whinings louder than before.

"Do you want me to let you in?"

"No!" he replied, the monosyllable coming in parenthetically amid his whining and complaining.

"What's the trouble?"

In a moment came the reply, scarce in a whisper, and eagerly spoken.

"The Injins have got me! Don't let me in!"

"I understand." Then Winslow fairly shouted, "Get out, I shan't admit you."

The negro renewed his mock entreaties, but being answered more fiercely than before, he turned and walked toward the woods.

"Persons in our situation must suspect everything they see or hear," said the hunter. "Had we admitted that negro, we should have had some companions that we do not particularly fancy."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SECOND RANGER.

After the meaning of the negro Pete's peculiar actions had been explained to Lucy, she determined to be more watchful and suspicious. When the servant had disappeared in the forest, she riveted her eyes for a long time upon the spot where he had last been seen, but nothing rewarding her gaze, she examined every other portion of the wood that came in her range of vision, not relaxing her vigilance for a moment.

Mrs. Heywood was not less attentive. Being upon the opposite side of room, she had an equally extensive field of observation, and she suffered no portion of it to be unattended. There were still parts of the wood, those covered by the ends of the hut, which escaped their eye. The duty of surveying this was consigned to Miss Jellaby, who, as a consequence, was compelled to walk backward and forward constantly.

"Sister Mary always *would* put the hardest work upon me," said she. "If our poor dead mother were living she would tell how many times I have volunteered to labor for others."

"I will change with you if you are not suited," said Mrs. Heywood.

"Oh, no, I'm satisfied; but I hope you are *grateful*. Well, I declare, I can't see anything, and I am going to rest a moment."

As she spoke, Miss Jellaby took her seat near the centre of the room, and occupied herself in looking around the apartment. Hearing the rustling of the limbs of the trees she naturally looked upward through the yawning gap in the roof, which happened to be exactly over her head.

One of the branches was swaying rapidly, and was agitated in a most singular manner. The spinster was on the point of making some remark about the strength of the wind

when she caught sight of a pair of human feet beating the air as they frantically sought for support on a limb, which the next moment sank low down with the weight of a crouching person upon it. Instantly a dull thump told that he had dropped upon the roof, where, inserting his feet in the opening, he forced his way through and came down lightly upon the floor.

It was now that Miss Jellaby found her voice, and her screams were deafening, and abated none the less when she discovered that the intruder, instead of being an Indian was a white man, in the garb of a hunter.

"Help! help! help! here's a man! Come, quick, Captain Bobston, all of you! He will kill us dead!"

"Shet up yer infernal clack, or *will* mash you!" said the stranger, impatiently. "Don't you see I ain't an Iojin?"

Winslow made his appearance at this junctur , followed by Pat Mulrooney. Miss Jellaby was still screaming, b ating the floor with her heels, while Lucy and her mother both looked as if ready to burst out in laughter at the ridiculous scene. As the Irishman's head rose to view he asked.

"Begorrah, what is all this scramin' about? That chap is a white gentleman, the same as myself."

"Of course," said the person referred to, as the lady ceas ed her outcries. "I was so considered at home, and was a favorite with the ladies."

"What is your name?"

"Hezekiah Smith at your service. If you've no objection I should like to know yours."

"Keturah Jellaby, and that is my sister and my niece, and those are my friends."

Hezekiah Smith bowed to the individuals indicated, and then addressed himself again to the lady whom he had threatened to "smash" a few minutes before.

"Ain't married now?"

"No, indeed, I am not, and never shall be," she indignantly replied.

"Oh, don't say that now. *I* ain't married yet and you're good looking."

Miss Jellaby turned her head away with a charming blush and Hezekiah winked knowingly at Lucy, who was in doubt whether to laugh or become indignant at his impudence.

"It strikes me you're in a hurry about matters," said Pat Mulrooney.

"This gentleman, I take it then is a friend of yours?" said Winslow, inquiringly.

"Yes; we entered into a partnership to do business for the general. *Mulrooney & Smith*—sounds shwately, especially the first name."

"Why did you not let us know that you had a companion when we entered the cabin?"

"The principal raison was that I hadn't any thin, jist."

"Well, but you expected his return."

"That I did, and so I lift him to sphake for himself, and a mighty good-looking chap he is, though not the best lookin' one, be the same towken, that belongs to the firm of *Mulrooney & Smith*."

"This is the second person that has approached the hut without being seen," said Winslow, with a smile, addressing himself to Mrs Heywood and her daughter. "I am afraid that we shall have to put on additional sentinels."

"I am confident he did not approach from this side," said Mrs. Heywood.

"Nor did he from this," added Lucy.

"Let the boy explain it himself," said Pat Mulrooney.

All this time, Hezekiah Smith had been doing his best to say something. As the others kept talking, he turned toward each, and with an extremely polite bow, paid the closest attention until he was through, and opened his mouth, and cleared his throat preparatory to cominciing himself. But each time he had been forestalled until now.

"The way of it was this," said he. "I approached this hut perhaps a half hour ago"—

"From which direction?"

Indicating the point, it was found to be toward the end of the house, so that Miss Jellaby was the derelict personage.

"I discovered something was wrong when I seen the

door fastened; and so I sneaked up, clum a tree and watched. When I seen the darkey come up and asked to be let in, I knowed there must be whites inside, or they wouldn't refus'd him admittance. Thinking as haow they might serve me as they did him, I waited awhile, and then dropped down on the roof and come through—frightened the ladies somewhat, particularly this lovely one here."

Miss Jellaby turned her head away, smiled, simpered and blushed.

"At any rate we are glad to receive your company," said Winslow. "If you choose you can remain here while we pass below."

"Just as you please. Hello! what's that racket mean down stairs?"

Thump, thump, thump, with a shock that shook the entire building, came the tremendous blows, either against the doors or sides. Immediately after, Pharaoh's head rose to view, as he gasped.

"Gosh all eberyting, dey're butting dar heads agin de house, and will soon butt it in."

"The bombardment has commenced, methinks," said Pat Mulrooney, as he and his friends hastily descended to the lower story.

CHAPTER XV.

A MISHAP.

Thump, thump, thump, steadily and heavily came the blows against the door. As the whites entered the lower apartment, they saw Pharaoh, with his back brace against it and the determination stamped upon his countenance that no one should force it inward as long as he could prevent it.

"Gosh all eberyting! dey're shovin' hard!" he exclaimed.

"Get away, Pharaoh," said Winslow, "you cannot help the matter any. The door is secured as strongly as possible."

"What in the name of creation are they doing?" asked Hezekiah, who had followed the others.

"May be its a way they have of nockin', in this haythen counthry," replied Pat. "Wait a moment till I hails them. I say there, what do yees want?"

The thumping suddenly paused a moment, and then commenced again.

"I say, ye spalpeens, howld on! What is it ye wishes?"

Again the blows ceased, and a voice asked in broken English.

"Who in dar?"

"None of yer business. What else?"

"White men in dar?"

"None of yer business. Go on with your questions."

"Let poor sick Injin in?"

"Twouldn't be expedient. I'm thinkin' you'd be apt to git considerable sicker if we get howld of ye in here."

"Won't let Injin in, eh?"

"No."

"Your answers certainly are explicit," laughed Winslow.

Being thus peremptorily denied, the supplicants ceased their words and blows, and were evidently debating what they should do.

"We must find out how many are there," whispered Winslow.

But to their surprise, the fugitives found it was about impossible to do this. The hut, as we have shown, was erected simply like a common cabin, the upper story not projecting over lower, as it generally does in a block-house. Most of the loop-holes were arranged so as to fire at a foe at a considerable distance, but there were several pierced in such a manner that the defenders could shoot downward at quite a sharp angle; from the nature of the case an enemy could approach so closely that he could neither be hit nor even seen from the upper story, and could only be reached from the lower part. Here there were loop-holes on every side, except in the door itself, and by standing before this several persons could remain invisible as long as they chose. Thus, it will be seen, the whites had no means of gaining

any knowledge of their visitors, unless they chose to run considerable risk in so doing.

"If it wouldn't be inconveniant to your sensibilities," called out Pat, "would yer plaise take a step or two to the left jist, so that we might have a view of yees?"

There was no evidence that this request was understood, and if it had been, it is not probable that those to whom it was addressed would have heeded it.

"You speak too cross to them," said Hezekiah. "You ought to be more polite."

"Suppose you axes them thin."

"My friend," commenced the New Englander, "would you be so very obliging an' condescending jist to move a step or two to one side, so that we may have a glimpse of your features. It would be very pleasant to us if you would do so."

It is hardly necessary to say that this appeal was as futile as the others.

"Begorrah, if that won't do, I know what will," said Pat decisively.

"Explain yourself."

"One of us can go out on the roof and take a paap from that situation. Captain Bobston there is jist the man."

The captain started, but quickly replied, with great dignity.

"Pooh, pooh, that plan would never answer at all. It's too foolish—too foolish altogether."

"And what's so very foolish about it?"

"It is running too much risk, without any prospect of being duly rewarded."

"I saa the trouble wid the captain, so I'll do it myself jist."

"I am not *afraid*," added the soldier, "but my wond is too troublesome to make it as safe for me as it would be for others."

"I boorded an owld flat-boat once, that was full of the haythan, and I ain't afeard to boord the roof that hasn't any of 'em on."

"It is an admirable plan, and I think none of us are so

well qualified to carry it out as yourself," said Captain Bobston encouragingly.

"I would advise you to be certain whether there are any of the Indians in sight before you pass out," said Winslow.

"I will do that same; do you remain here while I pass above, and larn from the leddies what they have seen."

The next moment Pat Mulrooney was in the upper story. Upon inquiry, he was told that nothing at all had been observed of the Indians. To satisfy himself, however, the Irishman took a survey from each side of the hut. Detecting nothing suspicious, he hesitated no longer.

He made his exit from the same opening which had afforded Hezekiah Smith his means of entrance. Drawing himself carefully through, his rifle was handed him; he seated himself upon the ridge of the roof and took a survey of the surrounding clearing and woods.

He now commenced working his way cautiously over the roof toward the eaves. This was a task of considerable difficulty owing to its steepness.

"How aisy I could take a little roll off of here," he reflected, "but I'll postpone that pleasure for the prisint."

It was necessary for Pat to pass to the very eaves and peer over before he could obtain any knowledge of the number of his enemies—a work of delicacy and not a little danger. Debating with himself a moment, he concluded to lie flat on his face and work his way carefully and gradually downward until his head projected enough to afford him the coveted view.

This plan decided upon, he lost no time in putting it into execution. He had progressed but a foot or two, when he found it was the easiest matter in the world to go forward, the only trouble being to prevent himself from going too fast in the downward direction.

He managed matters, however, very well, and in due time reached the edge of the roof, where he halted, raised his head, and looked over. He could see one Indian only, but believing there must be more, he dropped an inch or two lower down, where he was afforded a view of two more.

He counted them several times, to make sure, and then shoved himself backward.

Heavens! he couldn't do it! Every effort to do so only let him lower and made his hold still more uncertain. In a moment his head and shoulders projected over the roof, and his body was slowly but surely following. He dug his toes in the rotten wood, but their tenure was nothing, and he concluded that the only resource left him was to come down as gracefully as he could under the circumstances.

"Stand a little closer together, ye spalpeens," he called out, "so that ye can break my fall, jist. I'm comin' to pay yees a visit."

And the next moment he slid off the roof and dropped plump upon the heads of two of the amazed Indians.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ATTACK.

"If yer heads is broken it is yer own faults, for I hollered to yees, and I'm much obliged to yces for being so clever and letting me down so aisy," said Pat Mulrooney, as the stunning weight of his fall carried two of the Indians to the ground with him. The latter had heard the words, but his descent was too rapid for them to get out of his way. It would be difficult to express their emotions, as these two savages were precipitated to the earth, and, as they scrambled to their feet with the struggling Irishman. The first undoubtedly, was pure astonishment, but probably, uncertain whether their unceremonious visitor was an enemy or friend, they refrained from any hostile demonstration when the three rose together.

Pat Mulrooney now perpetrated one of the most audacious and imprudent stratagems that probably an Irishman ever conceived. The moment he arose to his feet, he began jumping up and down, screeching, shouting and cutting the antics of a raving lunatic. The Indians looked on astonished and amazed. Still shrieking and yelling in this outland-

ish manner, he sprung up into the tree and clambered upon the roof. By this time the Indians suspected a trick and fired at him, but he quickly put himself beyond their reach and the next moment was with his friends again.

The attack of the Indians had now commenced in earnest. They came against the door with a shock that shook the entire cabin, and awakened the most painful apprehension of the fugitives. Miss Jellaby set up a terrific screaming, but in the peculiar situation of the whites no heed was paid to it. Mrs. Heywood and Lucy, with an admirable coolness remained at their posts until Winslow call'd for them to descend, as there was no further need of them above.

"You are wanted here," said he, "the work of death has commenced."

"What can we do, William?"

"Load our rifles for us as we need them."

As he spoke, he drew the string of his powder-horn over his head, and with his bullet pouch, tossed it into Lucy's lap. The others threw their ammunition upon the floor, and taking their position at the loop-holes, awaited a glimpse of their screaming assailants.

There were four rifles in the party, counting that belonging to the captured Indian, Pi-arach not being furnished with any. As he was very frightened it was not deemed best to assign him any duty. Captain Bobston was exceedingly agitated, now that he realized the crises had arrived. He darted hither and thither, and when a yelling redskin body placed the muzzle of his rifle a ~~one~~ of the loop-holes and fired in, he made a spring in the air, and exclaimed.

"Hang the disgusting creatures, how imprudent they're getting! I say, Winslow, there is no one up stairs," he added, as if he had made a startling discovery.

"Well, what is there isn't. There is no one needed."

"Suppose they undertake to enter the cabin from that direction. Heavens! the thought!"

And without waiting to hear any more, Captain Bobston hurried to the upper story. The simple truth was, he concluded that matters were becoming altogether too dangerous upon the lower floor, and that the safest thing he could do

was to get away from it as far as possible. Here he leisurely examined his rifle, and took a furtive glance or two through the loop-holes.

"They can't very well send a shot in here," he mused, "and I'm safe from their bullets, but hang it, I wish that gap up there in the roof was closed, and I don't like to have that red dog down stairs. For all they've taken his gun, and tomahawk, and knives away, he looks savage enough to tear one to pieces. However," he added, thoughtfully, "I don't think they'll try to come in the roof. It is too dangerous to suit their ideas of war. I wonder whether I would be running more risk if I were with General Wayne? Hang me if I believe I would."

The discharge of rifles now became frequent, both within and without the hut. Added to this, the screeching of the assailants, and the strong smell of sulphurous powder that filtered upward through the crevices of the floor, and it will be seen that Captain Bobston's situation was far from comfortable.

"The deuce of it is, I don't know which way the thing is going. Suppose they break in."

The cold sweat stood in beads upon his forehead at the bare thought. It finally occurred to the captain that he ought to do something. Accordingly he pointed his gun out of one of the loop-holes and fired at random. What the result was he could only conjecture, but he re-loaded his piece with all dispatch, and peered cautiously out.

The savages were so close to the building that it was only now and then that he could distinguish one of their number, so that he had little reason to hope that any fatal effects had followed the discharge of his piece.

"I must keep up appearances," he added, "or that wild Irishman will be calling out to me. Hang it, they keep blazing away down there. Well, here goes again." Familiarity breeds contempt," and the continued presence of danger induced a sort of apathetic indifference among those whose alarm had been culminated into absolute terror upon the second attack of the Indians. Pat Mulrooney walked hither and thither as cool and collected as if hemmed in by the

army of General Wayne. He was continually watching for some opportunity of firing.

It was noticed by all that his spirits were greatly brightened, and he was continually muttering to himself. It was manifest he was cogitating upon some new and daring scheme that had entered his head. Several attempts were made to get it from him, but they uniformly failed. His invariable reply was, "Be aisy now, but ye'll witness a thrick of Pat Mulroonev's."

Winslow was considerably exhausted from his labor and the mental anxiety of the past few hours. Still he was sanguine of the result, inasmuch as the hut had withstood the fiery ordeal thus far. He spoke cheering words to all, and gathered much hope from the confident manner of the Irishman.

Mrs. Heywood and her daughter stood it like heroines as they were. Not a word of complaining passed from either. They sat upon the platform, which has been alluded to elsewhere, ready for any duty required, whether it was active work itself, or the more dreaded task of soothing the fears of Miss Jellaby. The latter labor, however, was kindly taken from their hands for the present by Hezekiah Smith, who was unceasing in his attentions. Despite the appalling surroundings of the fugitives, more than one smile was brought to their faces by the actions of these two personages.

Pharaoh sat stolid and silent in one corner, immediately behind the couple just mentioned. He had hardly spoken for the last half hour, except in answer to some inquiry. He seemed now to revive somewhat in spirits, and regain in some degree his usual loquaciousness.

"Gosh all eberyting, don't dey lub!" he suddenly exclaimed during a profound silence upon the part of all.

"Who do you mean, sir?" demanded Hezekiah, apparently with great indignation.

"Yah! yah! you two!"

"Wal, I don't know but what you're right there. Air he naow, Keturah?"

Miss Jellaby blushed and turned her head away, and Hezekiah did not press the matter further.

"Begorrah, but *coorting* goes well any time," said Pat Mulpooney. "I mind the time I was takin' Bridget Maghologhkogh home from the wake of her brother. There wa'n't any moon, stars or sun that night, and in going across the fields we got lost in a bog. Wal, we sunk in it clean up to our shoulders. I went down first. Bridget tried to pull me out, but ivery inch that I wint up so that when I got out she was in. Then I tried to pull her out, and as she came up I wint down, so that when I got out she was in. Then I tried to pull her out, and as she came up I wint down, till we changed places again. We done that same thing some half dozen times, till I proposed that we should sink quietly and gracefully down and shpend the time in *coorting*. Bridget held back a little at first, but the 'nature of the circumstances,' as they say, previnted her from howlding back long. She kept sinking gradually till she was down beside me agin, and we shpent one of the most delightful of times till morning."

"How did you get out finally?"

"Her older brother, Jim Maghologhkogh, came along with his hoss and hitched to us and pulled us out, about the middle of the forenoon of the next day. Worrah! but when will the haythens get tired of this burning business?"

The last question was caused by hearing the tramp of feet upon the outside, and the crackling of more brush, as it was heaped upon the embers.

"If they keep on at this rate," said Winslow, "they will bake the logs dry, and then burn them in spite of us"

"It might take them until to-morrow to dry 'em enough to do that same thing, wouldn't it?" asked Pat.

"It might, perhaps; I see nothing to prevent them from having even a longer time than that if they wish. Why do you ask?"

"If it isn't done by midnight, *it will never be done at all.*"

The eyes of all were turned inquiringly toward the Irishman, but he held his peace. He only added, in explanation, after much importunity, tnat he had bit upon a scheme. He admitted that it was desperate, but he entertained strong hopes of success.

"I would like to git a shot at one or two more of the hay-thens before dark," said he, "and as I can't git it here, I will go above to Captain Bobston and try it from his room. Be aisy here until I come back."

He hastily ascended into the upper apartment. As he emerged into it, he saw no signs of Captain Bobston. The Irishman looked carefully around him and discovered that one of their number indeed was gone, whether he had fled voluntarily, or whether he had been slain and carried away he could not tell. Dismissing the matter for the present from his mind, he approached the dead Indian, to make his preparations for the desperate scheme he had resolved upon.

CHAPTER VII.

A RAM.

The number of the attacking Indians was over twenty, all of whom were armed, they being upon the war-path. Had they been compelled to expose themselves in their assault, the latter would have stood some chance of driving them back. When we consider that one party were behind the bullet proof walls of the hut, it may strike the reader that there was no great disparity between the forces after all. The great drawback (if the expression is allowable) was that each company was too well protected. Although the cabin, when erected, had been made very strong, and almost impregnable against any force of the Indians, still it had several disadvantages. One of these, as we have endeavored to show elsewhere, was that a body of savages, when they *had reached* the hut, could with a little care remain there, and pass around and around it without danger, the loop-holes having been pierced very high, with the expectation of firing upon a foe at some distance. It may have been that the same chivalrous feeling which leads the red man to flaunt his scalp-lock defiantly into the face of an enemy, had something to do with this arrangement. Feeling confident of their ability to prevent any one from approaching, the reckless settlers had cut the loop-holes so high that an Indian could almost walk beneath them. When the latter, as they had done on several occasions, fired their guns through these orifices, they were obliged to insert the muzzle and reach up and fire without aim, trusting to the chance of striking some unwary white.

The negro Pete, upon flying with the horse from the approach of Pat Mulrooney, had dashed off at the top of the animal's speed at imminent risk of breaking both his neck

and his own. Having gone a quarter of a mile or so, he reined his horse down to a walk. Five minutes later he rode right into an Indian war-party, and was made a prisoner instantly. Among these were several who could speak broken English passably well, and they were not long in gaining a true idea of the state of affairs from the terror-stricken negro. They set out at once for the hut, taking Pete, of course, with them.

Upon reaching the clearing they discovered that the fugitives had entered the building, and to all appearance prepared themselves to resist any attack. Knowing how difficult it was to effect an entrance under these circumstances, they resorted to stratagem, sending the negro ahead as a decoy. It was their intention, in case the door was unfastened to admit him, to rush forward in a body and force their way within before the door could be barred and secured again. We have shown how this stratagem failed.

They now resorted to another scheme, somewhat similar to the first. Selecting one of their number, who was quite proficient in the English tongue, they sent him forward with two companions to petition admittance. When the Irishman made his appearance upon the roof of the hut, his actions were watched with interest, and more than one coppery, paint-bedaubed countenance expanded into a grin as he slid off the eaves and came down upon the unsuspecting savages below. When they discerned him upon the roof again, followed by the three savages, they believed the whites had been outwitted, and patiently awaited the entrance of their comrades into the building. The yell of the imprisoned Indian, and the spectacle of the other two being hurled to the ground quickly unseated them; and understanding at once that nothing could be accomplished by stratagem, they fired a volley at the audacious Irishman, rushing forward in a body toward the hut.

The foremost Indian fell headlong to the earth, pierced through by the rifle of Winslow. A third was almost instantly slain by Hezekiah Smith. But the advance was not checked in the least; on they came, like wild horses, and sprang madly against the door that kept back. They might

would have dashed against solid rock, and they were not long in making the discovery.

Still they fought like children, without any order, system, or definite plan. Inserting the muzzles of their rifles in the large loop holes, they fired indiscriminately, running to different sides of the building, dodging hither and thither, and constantly ducking their heads so as to avoid the vigilant rifles. But they were not always successful. The quick eye of Winslow and Pat Mulrooney occasionally picked off one, while they had no reason to believe that as yet they had accomplished anything.

The attacking Indians were a war party of Miamis on their way to join the hordes who were mustering to give battle to Anthony Wayne. As there was a chance to accomplish something in a smaller way, they exultingly seized this opportunity. Had the time at their disposal sufficed, they would have withdrawn at this point of the attack and starved the fugitives into submission; but as this could not be done, and as they were resolved to capture or slay them at all hazards, they remained scarcely a moment idle. They felt very sanguine of success when they learned from Pete that there were several females among their enemies.

At a signal from their leader they scattered in different directions to the wood, their flight being assisted by a well directed shot from Pat Mulrooney, and safely under cover of the trees they re-united again.

Brush, rotten twigs, and leaves were gathered, until a huge mass was collected sufficient to protect them in their approach to the building. Some difficulty was experienced in igniting the mass from the recent deluging rain. They succeeded, however, and with shouts of exultation watched the progress of the flames.

The logs smoked, steamed, and blistered, but after being subjected to the intense heat, now broke out into flame. Fuel was added again and again, and the fire renewed many times, until the building was almost enveloped in vapor, but still it held out against the dreaded element.

As the afternoon wore away and twilight settled over the wilderness, the fugitives began to hope the Indians had given

en over their intentions, as the fire had smouldered for the last hour or two, and nothing had been seen of them for the same time; but they soon learned how sadly they was mistaken.

Baffled in every attempt thus far, the savages did not despair of success in bringing the stubborn whites to terms. They resorted now to the very means which Winslow so much feared—the means which he was certain would accomplish what they desired—the dreaded battering ram!

A tree of considerable size was cut down, and the branches trimmed so as to afford a good support for the hands, and the butt sharpened. In using this formidable engine considerable risk was necessarily run from the rifles of besieged. The Indians therefore, waited until it was quite dark, when noiselessly lifting it from the ground, they grasped it firmly and ran at full speed toward the hut.

The first warning of the fugitives received of this new and alarming mode of attack was tremendous blows against the door, that shook the entire building. The slabs stood it bravely, though Winslow's heart almost failed him as he saw plainly that but several blows would be required to drive it inward, as if it were nothing but rotten boards.

"To your rifles!" he called. "Pick off every rascal you can! They will give us another in a minute!"

With an exultant yell at the success of their effort, the Indians retreated with their ram back into the darkness, and gathering headway they again rushed forward, delivering a more terrific blow than before. Every one felt the door yield, but their second shout of delight was drowned by the death shriek of two of their number, as they again hurried back in the darkness to gather momentum for the third blow.

The reader must not suppose that all time the rear of the hut was unguarded. The precaution of placing sentinels here had been attended to from the first. Conscious that the only means of escape now open was the roof, nearly all of the Indians who were not occupied with the ram, took their station so as to shoot or capture the first white who

appeared. The building was completely surrounded by their vengeful enemies.

The tumult became deafening. Certain of their prey, the most discordant and uproarious shouts, screeches, screams and yells arose from the throats of the Miamis, who, out of sheer animal delight, fired their guns again and again into the solid logs of the cabin, and pounded the stocks against the half-locked door. Everywhere the dusky demons were darting hither and thither, like so many spirits let loose from Pandemonium.

The pieces of the whites were silent. The savages believing that they had yielded in sullen despair, were perfectly reckless in exposing themselves. The third time the terrific ram struck the door with such force that the lower portion was carried inward, and shrieking louder than ever, the frantic redskins ran farther than usual with the resolve that this should be the finishing blow.

At this very instant, a dusky figure swinging his tomahawk on high, came running from the rear of the hut, shouting at the top of his voice.

"*The Long-Knives! The Long-Knives! They come! They come!*"

The ram was dropped as quickly as if it had been red hot, and pell-mell, helter-skelter, the Indians poured into the woods as if pursued by the King of Terrors himself, and he who had given the alarm was not the last by any means to ensconce himself within its sheltering cover.

It was some minutes before the savages gathered themselves together. When they did, inquiries took place, and the remarkable fact developed itself that the alarmist was *not* *est*, and could not be found. Whether he had fled further into the woods, or whether he had reason for concealing his identity, was not known.

It required but a few minutes to become aware of another fact. Among the score of savages collected together, there was not one who had heard or seen anything of the whites, although each had felt the panic, and, to use an expression quite common just now, had "skedaddled in the most approved style."

When these facts became known there was considerable speculation and wonder awakened. While a majority of the Indians believed their comrade to have been actuated by a desire for their good, they could not understand why he should keep himself so sedulously out of sight; and the feeling finally rose to such a point, that, had he been discovered, it is not improbable that violence would have been used toward him.

No sound or the least evidence of the whites had been heard since their flight, which was inexplicable upon the supposition that they had really come to the assistance of the fugitives. It was the invariable custom of the border-men at such times to take advantage of a panic among their foes, and to dash after them, with a series of yells and vocal performances that put to shame their own efforts in that line.

In the midst of the wonderment and mystery created by this complication of perplexities, the leader gave the order for his warriors to separate, and to approach the hut from different directions. This they proceeded to do at once.

Moving with their habitual caution and stealth, some twenty minutes were occupied in accomplishing this, at the end of which time the savages began to catch glimpses of each other in proximity to the building. Two of their number approached the door and listened. Not a sound was audible, and they saw the lower portion of the door pushed inward, just as the third blow had left it.

One by one the shadowy figures arose to their feet and gathered in a knot a few feet from the battered door. None of them discovered aught of the dreaded Long-Knives, and they were positive they had not re-inforced the fugitives within the building. Had the alarmist been discovered at that moment, short work would have been made with him.

The next moment the ram struck the door, which was carried with such force from its fastening that it was thrown to the other side of the apartment, and the impatient Indians swarmed into the hut. Here and there, clawing the empty air, clutching at each other, howling their disappointment,

they moved in their gropings after their prey. A few moments were only needed to show that they had fled to the upper story, where, without a moment's hesitation, they made their way in the same mad, tumultuous manner, while others warriors stood waiting upon the outside in case any passed out upon the roof. Torches were brought from the smouldering brush, as the Indians swarmed into the upper portions of the building, and here, by their glare, they made the discovery that every one of the fugitives were gone!

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

It is not often that such good fortune attends a party of fugitives escaping from Indians as now came to the lot of our friends.

Captain Bobston driven to a desperate recklessness by his increasing danger, followed the Indian upon the roof, reached the tree branches and got away by one of those fortunate turns of luck, which very rarely, but sometimes comes to a man. Had he made the attempt five minutes sooner or later, it is probable he would have been shot by the Indians on the outside.

When Pat Mulrooney approached the dead body of the Miami, it was at first with a feeling akin to pity; but when he recalled what he had attempted to do, the feeling left him.

Stooping down, he removed a small sack from the body of the savage. This contained the coloring matter so plentifully used by the aborigines. With the help of Smith, he soon disguised himself with it, and then doffing the dress of the Indian, his appearance was such that in the darkness of the night, it would have been impossible to identify him.

When it was fairly dark, the attack of the Indians was made. Everything being arranged beforehand, the Irishman descended to the ground at the opportune moment, and raised the startling cry.

"*The Long Knives! The Long Knives! They come! They come!*"

Had this been merely the expression of an idea that had just entered his head, it would have failed of its object. But the panic-stricken Miamis had scarcely left the vicinity of the hut, when the fugitives swarmed out, and under the direction of the Irishman made all haste through the woods.

By the time the Indians had recovered their fright and

returned to the Hut, the fugitives were several hundred yards away threading their way through the woods, as silently as shadows.

They kept up their flight without intermission until morning, when, as good fortune would have it, they came across a party of rangers under the renowned Simon Kenton, who had met the frightened Captain Bobston a short time before.

Under their escort all reached the settlement in safety. Here Winslow, Smith and Mulrooney joined the rangers in a pursuit of the Miamis, but Captain Bobston owing to the increased pain of his wound, was unable to accompany them.

He remained behind, paying the most assiduous attention Lucy Heywood.

Shortly after Anthony Wayne fought his great battle with the combined tribes of the forest, scattering them to the four winds of heaven, and bringing nearly a twenty years peace to the troubled frontier.

Captain Bobston finally discovered there was no hope of his succeeding in winning the hand of Lucy Heywood, and shortly after the battle, left in disgust, and when last heard of was engaged as a merchant in the oyster line in St. Louis.

Several years after the war, the negro Pete made his appearance, having been voluntarily released by the Miamis, who had taken him prisoner. He and Pharaoh lived to a good old age.

Hezekiah Smith and Miss Jellaby were married at the same time as Winslow and Lucy Heywood, and singular though it may seem, their married life was as happy and pleasant as that of our hero and heroine.

Pat Mulrooney remained on the frontier, and fell sighing for his country in the great Battle of the Thames.

THE END.

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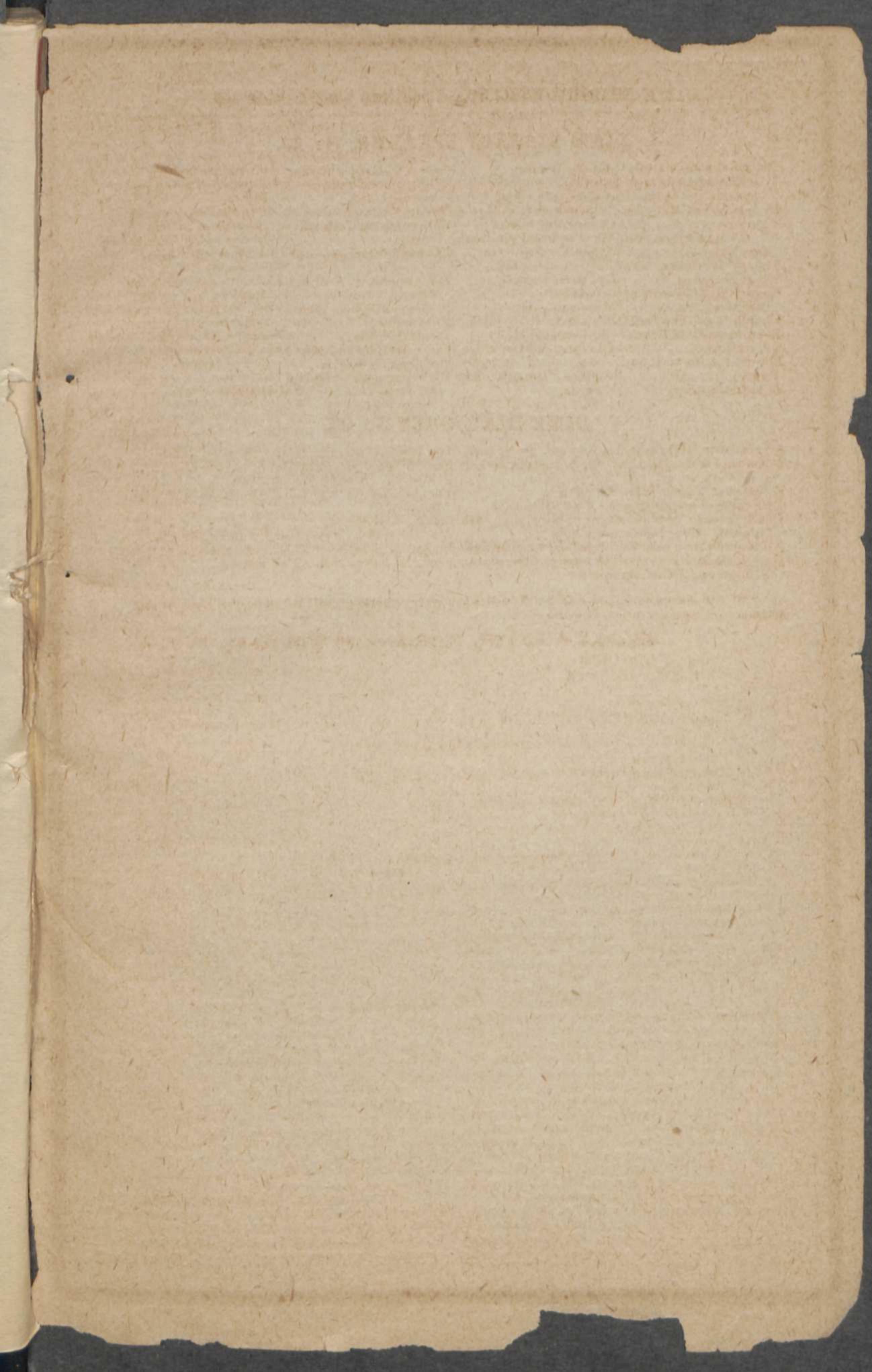
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